

THE NATIONAL AND ENGLISH REVIEW

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EPISODES OF THE MONTH THE EDITOR
IMPRESSIONS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

JULIAN AMERY

TELEVISION'S BIG YEAR RICHARD BAILEY
THE STRANGE CASE OF THE SOVIET WRITERS
EDWARD CRANKSHAW

FORMOSA DENYS SMITH

ESSAY ON PROSE. III. WALTER DE LA MARE

AND OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS BY JOHN BIGGS-DAVISON,
ERIC GILLETT, PROFESSOR J. SIMMONS, R. M. W. MARSH,
FRED URQUHART, MILWARD KENNEDY, LOMBARDO, AND
ALEC ROBERTSON

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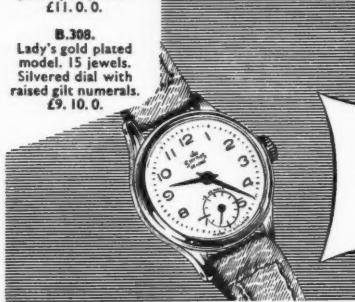
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EPISODES OF THE MONTH

FEBRUARY was an eventful month, but the matter which caused the most constant interest and worry was Formosa. This has become a test, not only of American strength *vis-à-vis* the Chinese Communists, but of Allied unity in the Far East. There is reason to fear that another "Korean war" may be impending, but with this difference; that a war in the region of Formosa would be much more difficult to localize than the war in Korea.

If this most dangerous development is to be avoided, the Chinese must be made to see that their interest lies in compromise and that they have nothing to gain from an attack on the Formosa position. And the Americans and ourselves must agree at once on what is to constitute the "Formosa position" for the purposes of defence.

Quemoy and Matsu

British policy at the moment appears to be at variance with the American only in regard to the off-shore islands of Quemoy and Matsu. But this may prove to be a vital difference, and every effort should be made to remove it. Sir Anthony Eden has left for the Far East, where he will be conferring with Mr. Dulles and others concerned in the Manila Pact. It is essential that agreement should be reached on the exact points at which aggressive action would lead to general war.

Nowhere is this more necessary than in the Formosa region, because it is there that the immediate danger of a clash exists. The Americans have evacuated Nationalist garrisons from the Tachen group of islands, and it was hoped that a similar operation would follow from Quemoy and Matsu. This might have been expected to satisfy Chinese pride and ambition, on the tacit understanding that the People's Republic would in due course be admitted to the United Nations and the Security Council,

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while Chiang Kai-Shek would be recognized merely as ruler of Formosa and the Pescadores, with no hope whatever of Allied support for his pretensions against the mainland.

American View Hardens

UNFORTUNATELY it no longer appears that the problem can be solved so simply. The American attitude, both official and unofficial, towards Communist China and Chiang Kai-Shek has changed out of recognition in recent months, and there can be no doubt that President Eisenhower is prepared to negotiate. But it is equally certain—as Denys Smith points out in his report for us this month—that the Americans will on no account surrender Formosa, and that they will take whatever steps seem to them necessary to prevent its falling into Communist hands.

The reason for their present obduracy about Matsu and Quemoy is that they fear the effect on Nationalist morale of a precipitate evacuation. For the time being at any rate they are convinced that the fate of these islands could determine the fate of Formosa itself. We should not assume that they are wrong, nor should we assume that the Chinese are bluffing in their war of nerves against Formosa. Only the plainest evidence of Anglo-American solidarity can ensure a peaceful outcome.

Political Casualties

LAST month two of the world's leading statesmen fell from power. The news of Malenkov's "resignation" came as a surprise, but the defeat of Mendès-France in the National Assembly was a foregone conclusion. The only cause for wonder was that he had not succumbed sooner to the jealousy of his opponents and rivals.

There has been much speculation about the change of leadership in Russia, and Mr. Bevan has advanced the theory that Malenkov was ousted because he stood for co-existence and the West did not respond to his overtures. This is an attractive theory, from the point of view of Left-wing politicians, because it can be neither proved nor disproved and because it revives the old legend that Tories cannot be trusted to work with sufficient earnestness for peace. On the whole, however, it appears more likely that Malenkov was the victim of a struggle for power which has been going on since Stalin died and which is probably not yet ended. Sir Winston Churchill has made no secret of his desire for a meeting at the highest level, but the ratification of the London and Paris Agreements must surely be regarded as a condition precedent. Until the European Alliance is firmly established no good can come of negotiation between East and West.

EPISODES OF THE MONTH

France Drops the Pilot

MENDÈS-FRANCE was just able to secure Assembly support for his European policy, but the Council of the Republic—the Upper House of the French Parliament—has yet to give its endorsement. It will be a tragedy if the decisions reached by wise and patient statesmanship are negated by the action, or inaction, of irresponsible politicians in France or Germany.

Why was Mendès-France defeated? He was certainly the best Prime Minister France has had since Clémenceau, and he gave evidence of being much more flexible and less prejudiced than *le vieux tigre*. He was capable of vigorous action—seldom has so much been achieved in so short a time—yet he was a supple negotiator and he did not hanker after ideal or stereotyped solutions. In an imperfect world he knew the value of imperfect results. He also knew his country's limitations, in terms of physical strength and morale, and his policy was based upon that knowledge. Thus he recognized the need for peace in Indo-China and for sweeping concessions in North Africa. At the same time he never failed to take the fullest advantage of a good bargaining position. Britons will be remembering for the next half-century, in rueful admiration, that it was he who extracted from them the pledge to keep four divisions and the Tactical Air Force in Europe.

After the Election?

HIS success was his undoing. In his determination to restore France to a state of health he came into conflict with many vested interests, of which by far the most implacable was that of the politicians themselves. The Communists naturally disliked him; he had never shown the slightest disposition to be a fellow-traveller. The Socialists supported him with their votes, but refused to join his Government. His own party—the Radicals—split into two factions, one remaining loyal to him, the other following M. René Mayer, who spoke with peculiar bitterness in the North African debate. All the Right-wing groups were suspicious of one who had served in Blum's Popular Front Government. The Gaullists gave a measure of support, but they are always a doubtful quantity. The most vitriolic opponents of all were the Christian Democrats (M.R.P.), who could never forgive Mendès-France for bringing about the euthanasia of E.D.C. This pious evocation of the Middle Ages—not to say the Dark Ages—had a metaphysical as well as a political content, and the mutual antipathy of Mendès-France and the M.R.P. is a painful reminder that in certain countries religious differences can still bedevil politics.

As we write no successor to Mendès-France has been found. Three men have tried to form Governments, and have failed. But no doubt some stopgap arrangement will be made. It is already clear that no one who stands for a drastic reversal of Mendès-France policies can hope to succeed. At the elections next year the French people, to whom Mendès-

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France made a direct and singularly effective appeal in his broadcasts, will have a chance to express their feelings. As a result, he may once again be called upon to serve his country and to carry forward the work which he has begun.

Pioneering Nuclear Energy

THE Government has given a restrained and factual account of its efforts to produce electricity from nuclear fission, and of the well-founded hopes of rapid advance in this field. This should be useful in restoring a balance to the public mind which has inevitably been upset by the implications of the hydrogen bomb. The first "experimental" nuclear power-station at Calder Hall is more than half-way towards production, and a more advanced type of plant is under construction in Caithness. The electricity produced will be fed into the national Grid. Absolutely new ground is being broken all the time, and costs and techniques, which can only be ascertained in the light of experience, are constantly being modified and revised. What has been done so far in the development of the industrial techniques which lead up to Calder Hall puts Great Britain many lengths ahead of any possible competitors. The Americans, with cheap and abundant oil and a coal industry only at half-strength, have not needed to be so positive or so venturesome in deciding upon their objectives. The possible techniques of exploiting nuclear power are manifold. America has chosen to advance slowly on a broad front. We have faced the risk of plumping for a single vital objective. Thus before long we shall have an invaluable export potential of capital goods and technological skill.

King Coal Still Unchallenged

THE commercial development of atomic energy obviously has a close relationship to the future of the nation's existing indigenous source of power, the coal industry. When it is appreciated that as recently as eighteen months ago the plans for the new atomic power stations had not even reached the drawing-board, and that some electricity may well be produced there within a year from now, the position of the coal industry clearly needs to be reviewed. However, the conclusion stands that for a generation to come we shall urgently need all the coal that the miners can get. The point is that, without the expected supplement to electricity supplies from nuclear power, there was no prospect of home-produced coal being adequate, within some millions of tons, to produce enough electricity for the growing needs of industry. King Coal remains firmly enthroned for many years to come, and it is still among the foremost industrial objectives that we should have an efficient coal industry.

EPISODES OF THE MONTH

Management Is All

MR. GEOFFREY LLOYD is, therefore, to be congratulated on his prompt action to give effect to a recommendation of Dr. Fleck's Committee on organization, by the immediate overhaul of the Coal Board itself. Delay in this important matter would have seriously weakened the impact of this authoritative and challenging document upon the industry. Now there is hope—and it will seem to some a last hope—that an era of nearly ten years' indecision will be brought to an end and a fresh start made upon accepted principles.

The report will surprise and disconcert many of the Coal Board's most vocal popular critics. "Decentralization," in its usually accepted sense, is dismissed. There should be more, not less, centralized control, a tighter and more effectively disciplined chain of command from Board Headquarters to colliery. Officials, the presence of whose cars at the pithead has attracted censure, are not numerous enough, in the sense that executives have been hampered in the discharge of their duties by the lack of an adequate staff. The miners' own reputed indignation at the multiplicity of officialdom is analysed as amounting in many cases to the lack of a proper sense of discipline, a quality which is found lacking at all levels of the organization. The main conclusion is that the industry can and must be "managed," as that term is understood and applied through Dr. Fleck's own concern, the I.C.I. The varying characteristics of different collieries are not accepted as an obstacle to the laying down of proper standards of efficiency, or to their enforcement, which, it is implied, can be achieved by the quality of management, even though without the usual stimulus of the "profit motive."

Hope of Better Roads

THE Minister of Transport has made the announcement which was foreshadowed in the Queen's speech about plans for the road system. He was fairly specific in saying which schemes of importance were in contemplation, but much less so when it came to how much money would actually be spent, and when. It is not surprising that the roads have arrived, almost at the same moment as the railways, at the top of the queue for a share in the nation's yearly investment. Next to nothing has been spent on the road system, apart from repair and maintenance, since 1939. Road-users have been pressing the case strongly through their organizations. No one with eyes in his head needs to be told that conditions on the roads are parlous; and there is the further sombre reflection that, if the present number of vehicles were not artificially limited by purchase tax, congestion might well increase about fourfold. So it is good news that the Government has a plan and a time-table for expenditure, however indefinite.

Capital Punishment : The Wrong Decision

ON February 10 the House of Commons defeated by 245 votes to 214 a motion to suspend the death penalty for a trial period of five years. In our opinion this was the wrong decision and we much regret the fact that the voting, though free, was largely on party lines. Only a handful of Conservatives voted with the minority.

Those who believe that capital punishment should be abolished in this country are for the most part quite sensible people, whose view of the matter is prompted as much by reason as by instinct. They feel that the killing of human beings in cold blood is a barbaric and out-of-date practice, but they would not oppose it if they were convinced that it acted as an effective safeguard against violent crime. If they had to choose between the continuance of hanging and a perceptible increase in the number of murders, they would naturally choose the former. But they regard this choice as being unreal and fictitious, and the evidence suggests that they are right.

Why the Refusal to Change?

AMONG the defenders of capital punishment three schools of thought, or types of mentality, can be distinguished. First, there is the ancient theory that justice should be retributive—"an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." This theory has been so discredited, and its basic immorality and utter futility so often exposed, that its influence, though still very strong, is not generally admitted.

Another view, which resembles, but should not be confused with, the retributive view, is that for every crime there is an appropriate penalty, and that the existence of a known and almost immutable "scale of punishments" helps to create a civilized atmosphere in society. Up to a point this is a sound conception, and it owes little or nothing to the ignoble motive of vengeance. But why should death necessarily be regarded as the appropriate penalty for murder? In the absence of solid argument, one can only assume that the determining factor here is not moral or practical, but aesthetic. To punish murder with death may be said to indicate a nice sense of symmetry, but the more relevant criteria are surely those of conscience and common sense.

Finally, there is the repeated allegation that capital punishment is indispensable as a deterrent. This could be maintained with more plausibility if the experience of countries which have abolished the death penalty showed that an increase in violence had resulted. But in fact their experience shows nothing of the kind. It is true that our police are unarmed, but their lives would probably be in much greater danger if they were armed. They are protected in the discharge of their duty by the comparative mildness of their character and methods, rather than by the sanction of the gallows.

Price of Tea

THE high price of tea has been clutched at gratefully by the Opposition, and a great deal has been made of it in party political speeches. It is a theme with obvious appeal. The positive side of the argument is, however, seldom pressed, for its only conclusion would be that the Government should resume control of the tea trade (which Labour gave up in 1951), limit consumption by rationing, and alleviate the price by a subsidy. Nothing else will in any way affect the cost of tea to the housewife, until normal market prices restore the balance between supply and demand. This is temporarily out of line, because Americans are wanting more tea instead of expensive coffee, and because much more is being drunk as standards of living rise in the countries where it is grown. A great deal of nonsense is being talked about the profits of the tea companies. Commodity producers always make big profits when the price of their product rises sharply, but they have to work on extremely fine margins when their markets are falling or weak. Relatively constant overheads and investment outlay have to be met out of income, the level of which is subject to severe fluctuations. A judgment on what is a fair level of profit for a commodity producer, if such a thing can be made, must therefore take into account an average of several years.

No Par Value Shares

THE recent debates in both Houses of Parliament on the subject of shares of no par value may lead to a wider public interest in the subject. Ignorance of the issues involved is widespread and a determined effort to dispel it would be worth-while. As the law stands the memorandum of a company with shares must state the amount of share capital and the division thereof into shares of a fixed amount. In any company where the shareholders have "ploughed back" profits over a period, this "nominal" capital may be much out of line with the capital employed in the business, yet the profits and dividends are declared, as a percentage, not of the capital employed, but of the nominal capital. A company may have begun with £½ million, which, owing to the prudent forebearance of shareholders, may have grown to £1½ million employed in the business. The earnings on the latter may be 15 per cent. and the dividend 5 per cent., but as a percentage of the nominal capital the figures would be 45 per cent. and 15 per cent., which would mislead the ignorant, particularly the wage-earner in the industry, who would compare it with the contents of his pay-packet and draw erroneous conclusions.

Companies whose capital is in shares of no par value (n.p.v.) would pay dividends expressed as so many shillings and pence per share. The profits and dividends thus stated would be clear, and easy for the layman to understand. One of the results of this method (it is argued by those in

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favour of it) would be improved relations between capital and labour. There are many technical arguments in favour of, and some against, n.p.v. shares, which cannot be deployed here, but any new method likely to bring closer co-operation in industry should be permitted. Goodwill on all sides would be necessary and we find unacceptable two arguments put forward by the T.U.C. to the Gedge Committee—that the issue of n.p.v. shares would be to camouflage the payment of excessive dividends, and that trade union leaders would not succeed in explaining such shares to their own rank and file.

Successor of Rhodes

THE peerage conferred upon Sir Godfrey Huggins, Prime Minister of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyassaland, has given deep pleasure and satisfaction to his countless admirers. He has now been a Prime Minister for longer than Walpole, longer than Mackenzie King; he holds the Commonwealth record. But above all he has helped to establish the British tradition of Government in Central Africa and has brought into being a new State, which is pledged to the ideal of partnership between races.

Superficially, there is little resemblance between Cecil Rhodes and the quiet, down-to-earth, practical man who has done so much to make Rhodes's dream a reality. Yet Huggins, though his apparent ordinariness has stood him in good stead, has a most unusual blend of qualities. He combines the progressive instincts of a man of science (he was a surgeon before he was a politician) with the conservative instincts of a settler, and in addition he has a talent for governing which almost amounts to genius. Long may he live to legislate in the country which made him, and in the country which he has made.

Stop Press

Since we wrote M. Faure has succeeded in forming a Government in France, and since "Lombardo" wrote his Market Review, Bank Rate has been increased again by one point to $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

IMPRESSIONS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

By JULIAN AMERY

I. THE CENTRAL AFRICAN FEDERATION

THE Central African Federation has been launched on a flood tide of prosperity. It is still too soon to cry success. But, already, the predictions that Federation would be introduced amid rioting and bloodshed have been disproved by the event. The new State has made a good start.

Anyone who experienced the heated controversies which preceded Federation must be impressed by the prevailing political calm. The new constitution has been accepted; and its inevitable growing pains have so far given rise to little serious criticism.

The existence of four Governments (and four Governors) to administer so small a population provides a natural target for the critic. The top-heaviness of the machinery of Government is probably more apparent than real; but it has tended to revive the question whether the Federal system should not give way to amalgamation. Most of the European leaders would always have preferred amalgamation. They recognize, however, that no such change could be seriously considered, until the seven-year trial period provided for in the Act has elapsed. The Federal Government is pledged on this score, and, as Sir Godfrey Huggins recently declared in London, they are determined to "play the game." Most Europeans, moreover, realize that amalgamation would hardly be practical politics unless it could count on some measure of African support. This is by no means impossible.

African affairs are, under the Federal Constitution, reserved to the Territorial Governments. So long, indeed, as the larger part of the African population live their own life in the Reserves, this separation of powers should work well enough. The rapid growth of industry, however, makes increasingly for the economic and geographical integration of European and African life; and it must be questionable how long two communities working in the same industries and living in the same general areas can continue to be administered one by the Federal, the other by a Territorial, Government. In the long run, the concept of partnership will probably lead towards amalgamation, just as *Apartheid* in South Africa leads logically, as its exponents point out, to a Federation of European and African States. The issue, indeed, is not immediate, and the rate of progress towards amalgamation will probably be governed by the speed at which economic integration takes place.

It is significant, however, that European opinion has given a cold reception to the proposal advanced by Mr. Van Eeden, whom some observers regard as sympathetic to Afrikaner Nationalist ideology, for dividing the Federation into a self-governing European Dominion and three Protectorates—Nyassaland, Barotseland and N. E. Rhodesia—which would remain under the Colonial Office.

While the Federal scheme was still under discussion European opinion in Northern Rhodesia was solid for it, while the critics were strongest in

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Southern Rhodesia. To-day these positions seem to have been reversed. Salisbury is proud to be the capital of a great State and its leaders welcome the increased revenues derived from the Northern Rhodesian Copper Belt. The Northern Rhodesians, by contrast, rather miss their revenues, and, although Lusaka continues to expand, they cannot help regretting its passing political importance.

The new Federal Civil Service, moreover, has still to build an *esprit de corps* between its recruits from the Northern Rhodesian Civil Service, trained at British Universities and proud of their Colonial Office tradition, and those from the Southern Rhodesian Administration, less highly trained, perhaps, but with a generation of self-government behind them.

But more striking—and far more important—than these political issues is the growth of material prosperity. The expansion of the copper mines, the high price of copper, and the maintenance of a steady market for Rhodesian tobacco, have led in turn to the rapid development of secondary industry and to the mushroom growth of new housing estates, new African locations, new shops and new office buildings.

To maintain this rate of development calls for new supplies of power: and the great debate at the present time is over the respective merits of the Kariba and Kafue hydro-electric power schemes. The Kariba is the more ambitious project, but more costly and slower to complete. The Kafue, though smaller, would be a good deal cheaper and could be in operation at least two years earlier; a consideration which appeals particularly to the copper companies who may face a shortage of power in 1959. Local patriotism in Northern and Southern Rhodesia, seconded perhaps by the appetites of their respective contrac-

tors, has sharpened the controversy. The decision which the Government has to take—hard enough on the merits of the case—is thus complicated by political considerations. The optimists urge that the Federation needs both schemes and should start both at once. Rhodesian credit stands high, but practical statesmen may well be satisfied if they can raise the necessary money to make even one scheme possible.

The Africans have shared in the rising prosperity of the Federation. There has been a noticeable increase in the last three years in the number of Africans driving motor cars. The bicycle is almost universal, and African standards of dress seem much higher. Africans, moreover, are turning increasingly from the mealie to wheaten bread, not always to the advantage of their health, but an indication of growing prosperity. The locations in Salisbury, Lusaka and on the Copper Belt show a striking improvement both in the quality and in the number of African houses. Here is the real reason why there has been no serious African opposition to Federation.

The strike of African mine-workers on the Copper Belt results partly from a natural desire for higher wages in good times, and partly from a struggle for power within the trade union. The union leaders have almost certainly over-played their hand both in pitching their claim too high, and in refusing arbitration. The companies look like winning this round; but, if so, it will be the first setback the union has received for a long time. So far the strike has been peaceful in character, and although European opinion has been irritated by its irresponsibility, it is unlikely to retard the gradual spread of trade unionism in the Federation.

All this time, the great debate has continued between the mining companies and the European trade union

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on the problem of African advancement. Only a few Africans are interested in this problem, but its solution may have far-reaching effects on the future pattern of European-African partnership. The Rhodesian Selection Trust and the Anglo-American group of companies have each put forward a scheme for African advancement. The European union, on a general ballot, has accepted the principle of African advancement and its leaders are now considering the detailed proposals of the companies.

Advancement is not confined to the mining industry. Southern Rhodesia has got over its initial surprise at finding six African members sitting in the Federal Legislative Council. The first African lawyer has now been called to the Bar and has been helped by his European colleagues to establish his chambers in the main legal centre of Salisbury. Preparations go forward for the multi-racial University; and plans are being made for a Federal Centre near Salisbury, which would include accommodation for African leaders and facilities for Europeans and Africans to meet. Surely, if slowly, partnership between the two races is coming into being.

II. THE SOUTH AFRICAN UNION

By comparison with the Rhodesias, the political scene in South Africa seems charged with problems. These cannot be understood, however, or seen in their proper perspective, unless the background of material prosperity and economic expansion is constantly borne in mind. Political tensions, which at a distance sometimes seem close to breaking point, are, in practice, relieved by the continuing improvement in living standards of all sections of the community. So long as there is

prosperity, there will be room for manoeuvre and time to find solutions.

The political scene is overshadowed by the Nationalist caucus' rejection of Mr. Havenga. Many believe that this decision has lost South Africa a great opportunity. Mr. Havenga certainly enjoyed the confidence of the City of London and of the Commonwealth as a whole. He would have rallied to his support moderate elements among the English-speaking as well as the Afrikaner sections of the population, including, perhaps, some supporters of the United Party. These things might have given him the strength to hold to a moderate course for four or five years, and so help South Africa to turn a dangerous corner.

As it is, the gulf between the two parties is more clear-cut than ever. The leaders on both sides are now evenly matched; and the extremist record of Mr. Strydom has given new cohesion and purpose to the United Party. Mr. Havenga's retirement, along with that of Dr. Malan, marks the end of an epoch. The last prominent veteran of the Boer War has quitted the public scene. The game is now in the hands of a new generation.

Mr. Strydom has inherited the problem which baffled Dr. Malan. How to disfranchise the coloured voters in Cape Colony? The Nationalists have no prospect of securing the two-thirds majority of both Houses required for this under the Constitution. Their choice, therefore, would seem to lie between "packing" the Senate or creating a subservient Constitutional court. Either course will give rise to fierce opposition.

Mr. Strydom has given a pledge that he will not attempt to introduce a republic in the lifetime of the present Parliament, which may still run for two years. Most observers, indeed, judge that he is more likely to begin by

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raising South Africa's claim to the three Protectorates.

The question of the Protectorates is always "a good cry" for electoral purposes, but there is a more serious reason why it may now be revived. Hitherto there has been more talk than action about *Apartheid*. But the more extreme Nationalists now seem determined to make a reality of their policy. The Bantu Education Act and the eviction of Africans from Sophiatown are practical examples of this new trend. Even more startling is the declared intention of the Government to remove the Bantu altogether from the Western Cape Province. The exponents of *Apartheid* have always claimed that, though they would refuse full citizenship rights to the African in European areas, they would give him exclusive citizenship rights in African areas. Hitherto this claim has not sounded very convincing. The African Reserves within the Union, though considerable in area, are small in comparison to the total African population. If the Union Government, however, could add to Ovamboland, Transkei and its other African Reserves, the whole of Bechuanaland, Basutoland and Swaziland, the policy of *Apartheid* would at least appear more plausible than it does to-day. The decision to carry out *Apartheid* may thus tend of itself to revive the issue of the Protectorates.

The Union Department of Native Affairs is certainly working hard to win over African support. They are unlikely to find many adherents in the three Protectorates, though, in certain circumstances, even a small number might be an embarrassment to the British Government. Their prospects are rather brighter among tribal leaders in their own Reserves. The offer of

greater authority for the chiefs and of larger subsidies for native administration may have some appeal. *Apartheid*, however, will find little support among the African urban population. There, indeed, the development appears to be the other way. The moderate leaders of the African Congress have mostly been placed under a ban. Others with more extreme views are taking their place.

What of the future? The Nationalists have defined their policies clearly enough. Can they put them into practice? The attempt must certainly arouse strong opposition. European opinion had little objection to laws which only enforced existing social customs; but economic segregation is another matter. Industrialists in the Western Cape Province, for instance, are already disturbed at the thought of being deprived of their African labour. Nor is the suggestion that African servants should be out of the towns at night time at all attractive to the ordinary householder or hotel keeper. A point has been reached, in fact, where *Apartheid* cannot be carried much further without running into important European vested interests. The Nationalists may thus be faced with a choice. Either they can push on with their policies at the risk of alienating electoral support. Or they will hesitate, in which case the natural trend to economic integration will relegate *Apartheid* to the sphere of social convention. To which course will opinion in the Union incline? It is unlikely to be much concerned by the censure of U.N.O. or the criticism of the British Press. But it may well be decisively influenced by the success or failure of the Rhodesian experiment in multi-racial partnership.

JULIAN AMERY.

TELEVISION'S BIG YEAR

By RICHARD BAILEY

IN November 1936 the B.B.C. transmitted the first television programmes in the world. They were received by a handful of people, who could still only be numbered in thousands when the outbreak of war put television off the air. It is estimated that by September, when the Independent Television Authority is due to start its activities, 4½ million sets will be watched nightly by 10 million people throughout Britain. This is a fact of which everyone from panel game addicts to specialists who only look in at Coronations, must take into account. From all points of view this is going to be television's biggest year since the war.

The Television Act received the Royal Assent on July 30, 1954. It had been debated for over eighty hours in the Commons and forty hours in the Lords. So much time was spent arguing hypothetical cases that at the end of it all the issue was so confused that the only thing viewers were certain of was that I.T.A. programmes would feature chimpanzees. This prospect seemed to worry the politicians a great deal more than the public.

Since the end of July measures for the implementation of the Act have been put in hand. Sir Kenneth Clark, Chairman of the Arts Council, was appointed Chairman of the Authority and Sir Robert Fraser, Director-General of the Central Office of Information, Director-General. The membership of the Authority was announced in August. It includes industrialists, a film critic, an ex-headmistress, a trade unionist, a Liberal peer newspaper proprietor, and distinguished individuals charged with the special re-

sponsibility of watching over the interests of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The task it has taken on is a formidable one.

In considering the work of the I.T.A. it is important to remember that the Television Act left the B.B.C. free to continue all its present services. For the past decade the B.B.C. has been the only employer of television producers, script writers, technicians and performers. It is a great initial disadvantage for the new Authority that its programmes will have to bear comparison with those of the B.B.C. Nowhere else in the world does commercial television compete with a service that carries no advertising whatsoever. Only in Britain would it be thought possible to attempt to break down a State television monopoly by the device of State-sponsored competition.

The I.T.A. is given wide powers under the Television Act, but there are a number of built-in impediments on such things as finance and types of commodity advertised that may lead to trouble. The provisions of the Act may be summarized as follows. The I.T.A. will erect, own and operate transmitters needed to provide an alternative programme. It is given a life of ten years, which may be extended by Parliament. In its first year I.T.A. is to receive a loan of up to £1 million from the Treasury and may be granted a total loan of £2 million in its first five years. In addition it is to receive £750,000 a year as its share of television licence fees.

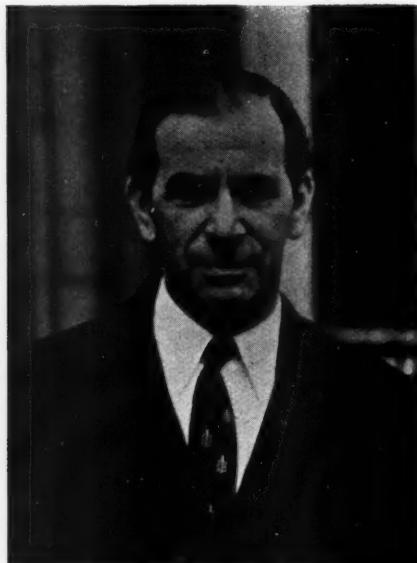
The I.T.A. will not itself produce programmes but will rent facilities to programme contractors who in turn

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LORD KEMSLEY.

Picture Post Library.



MAURICE WINNICK.

Planet News Ltd.

will sell time to advertising agents. The programmes themselves will be free of advertising and will presumably resemble those of the B.B.C. Advertisements will be allowed at the beginning and end of programmes and at natural breaks within them. A ratio of 10 per cent. advertising to straight programmes is contemplated, giving six minutes advertising in each hour. Special magazine programmes in the form of documentary shopping guides will be allowed in off peak hours. The Act bars, but does not define, offensive advertising and prohibits advertisements close to religious services or state events.

The financial risks in commercial television are borne by the programme contractors and to a lesser extent the advertising agents. It now seems clear that the I.T.A. will start its activities by instalments, beginning with the London transmitter which will be ready to start operations at the beginning of

September. The Birmingham transmitter is expected to start up by the end of the year. The Manchester transmitter may be later still as it is not, after all, using the B.B.C. mast at Holme Moss and an alternative site has not yet been fixed.

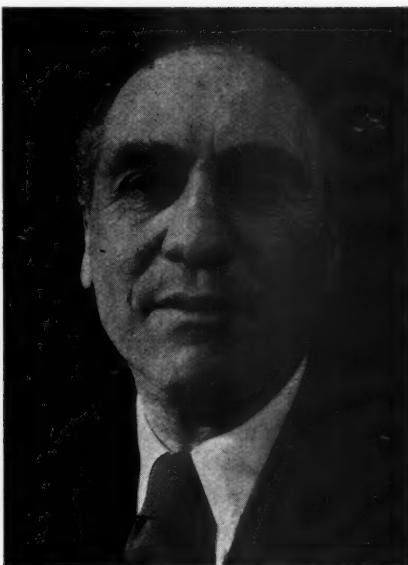
There are so many imponderables in deciding on the audience that I.T.A. can expect that only a television panel would dare give anything in the nature of definite answers. Three different sets of figures are involved. The first is that of the actual population living in the areas in which it should be possible to receive the I.T.A. programmes. Assuming that each station has a radius of 30-40 miles the population figures would be: London, 9 million; Birmingham, 5 million; and Manchester, 9 million. Some doubts have been expressed as to whether a radius of 30-40 miles will in fact be achieved by the London transmitter from its initial position at Croydon. There are

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LORD ROTHERMERE.

Daily Mail.



SIDNEY BERNSTEIN.

Camera Press.

other uncertainties on the technical side. The I.T.A. programmes will go out on a group of wavelengths called Band III. No one knows, until transmissions actually begin, just how effective Band III reception will be. The radius in which reception will be possible may be less than that achieved by the B.B.C. Band I stations.

The second set of figures concerns the number of sets in existence that can be, or will be, adapted to receive the new programmes. The present B.B.C. service uses five channels available in Band I. I.T.A. and the proposed B.B.C. alternative programme have been allocated eight channels in Band III. To receive both B.B.C. and I.T.A. programmes viewers require thirteen-channel receivers.

Pye began marketing multi-channel receivers in January 1954 and most other manufacturers had followed suit by the 1954 radio show. Even these thirteen-channel sets will require tuners

for the new service, however, costing up to £5 plus a service charge for fitting. Older sets will have to be fitted with adaptors costing from £5 upwards with a fairly heavy service fee depending on the amount of alteration needed. Many sets made before 1949 with T.R.T. (tunable radio frequency) circuits cannot be adapted for Band III reception. In addition to the alterations needed to the sets themselves special aerials will be required. These will cost about £4 with at least a further 50s. for fixing. The total amount to be spent by would-be Band III viewers will therefore range from £10 to £20 according to the age of the set. The big question is how many viewers will be prepared to pay these sums in order to see television programmes on which Mr. Gilbert Harding does not appear. There is also the difficulty that with every television set requiring adjustment and a new aerial there will undoubtedly be a shortage of technicians

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with consequent delays for many would-be viewers.

The B.B.C. Audience Research unit estimated that 13 per cent. of the whole adult population looked at evening television programmes in the fourth quarter of 1954, and that the average size of the television public was 11 million. This is the third vital figure in the I.T.A. sum. The average evening audience consists of some 41 per cent. of the total television public which means about 4½ million adults. What proportion of this audience will move over to I.T.A. is problematical. At first the I.T.A. programmes will be limited in range, probably of inferior quality because of lack of production experience and hampered at the receiving end by the cost of adapting sets and installing aerials. Even so there seems no reason to doubt that the television public will not want its measure of independence. The number of sets is now increasing with a snowball-like progression. In 1947 there were 14,560 sets. This number roughly trebled itself in 1948, '49 and '50. It then doubled itself in 1951 and '52, by which time it had reached 1½ million. Since then there has been a steady and spectacular rise. At the end of 1954 sets were selling at the rate of 460,000 a month. At the beginning of 1955 over 4 million sets were in use. At this rate there will be 9 million sets in 1960. Television has passed from the stage of

being a medium for the masses to begin a mass medium. There is no reason for supposing that B.B.C. programmes are so good that they will not lose viewers to commercial programmes. Even if the division is 50/50 the I.T.A. programmes would be on nearly 3 million screens after four years.

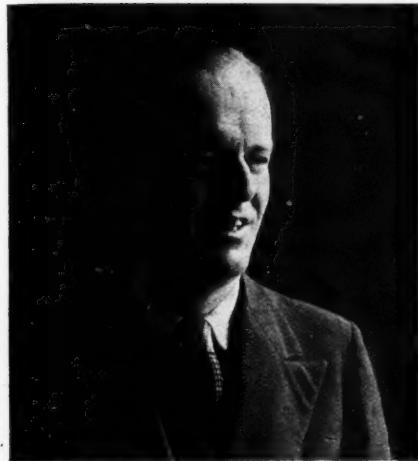
In all considerations of the financial arrangements of I.T.A. it must be remembered that commercial television is not, as some would imply, simply a method of putting big business on to the air. It is first and foremost the method chosen by the Government for breaking the B.B.C.'s monopoly of the most powerful and persuasive information medium ever known. Secondly, it is a method of financing an alternative programme from advertising revenue. A second programme will cost anything from £5 million a year upwards. If this sum did not come from advertisements it would have to come from licences. The ten-year plan of the B.B.C. makes it clear that a second programme could start in three years' time only if the present Treasury deduction of £2 million a year was retained and the G.P.O. costs of collecting licences and dealing with evasion were excluded. In other words an alternative supplied by the B.B.C. would mean a higher fee or a longer wait.

An element of competition between contractors has been introduced by

PROGRAMME CONTRACTORS

	Monday— Friday	Saturday— Sunday
Associated Broadcast Development Company Ltd.	Birmingham London Manchester	London —
Associated Rediffusion Ltd.	—	Birmingham Manchester
Granada Theatres Ltd.	—	—
Kemsley-Winnick Group	—	—

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SIR KENNETH CLARK.

Picture Post Library.



SIR ROBERT FRASER.

Camera Press.

allocating week-days and the week-end to different contractors, as shown in the diagram.

The choice of contractors has given rise to a certain amount of criticism. On the face of it, however, it is difficult to see what types of firms, other than those in the radio, entertainment or newspaper industries, would have been equipped to undertake the job of providing programmes. The choice of the Rothermere and Kemsley newspaper groups rather than of others has been widely criticized, and was one of the principal topics in the debate in the Commons on November 23, 1954. The Opposition motion for debate expressed "alarm at the manner in which the Television Act is operating" and urged its amendment or repeal. Much more solid criticism can be advanced against some of the contractors on the ground of lack of adequate capital resources. It will be a bad start for commercial television if any of its contractors fail for this reason.

The pioneer work will of necessity be carried out by the two contractors sharing the London transmitter. The

head of Associated Broadcast Development Co. Ltd. is Mr. Norman Collins, formerly Controller of the B.B.C. Television Service. The directors include Sir Robert Renwick of Associated Electrical Industries, Lord Duncannon of R. Benson, Lonsdale & Co., Sir Alexander Aikman of E.M.I. and Mr. C. O. Stanley of Pye Radio. Associated Rediffusion Ltd. includes among its directors Mr. Paul Adorian (Broadcast Relay), Mr. Charles Truefitt (Associated Newspapers), Lord Rothermere (the *Daily Mail*), Mr. H. C. Drayton (British Lion Films and United Newspapers).

The other two contractors will not be operating until the end of the year. Granada Theatres Ltd. is headed by Mr. Sidney Bernstein who, with his brother, controls Denman Cinemas, Variety Theatres Consolidated and the Transatlantic Picture Corporation. In the Kemsley-Winnick Group Mr. Maurice Winnick will control programming, with Mr. John Macmillan as general manager. Mr. Isaac Wolfson (Great Universal Stores) is a member of this group.

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The finances of I.T.A. can only be forecast at the present time. Until contractors actually sign contracts with I.T.A. it is impossible to say definitely what sums they will charge advertisers. The optimism of the contractors is one of the most remarkable features of the whole I.T.A. question. They have taken on the job not only without knowing what they will have to pay but without knowing how much advertising time they have to sell. Such faith in the merits of competition is rare.

The starting point in estimating what the contractors can charge is the present practice of the B.B.C. The B.B.C. puts on forty hours television a week and in 1953-54 spent £4 million on its services. This means an average expenditure of some £1,900 an hour of which the actual programme probably cost £700 and the remainder goes on engineering, studio costs, rents and so on. If capital expenditure is taken into account, annual expenditure is nearer £5 million and hourly rates nearer £2,400. The B.B.C. figures relate to a single programme going out to all viewers. The commercial programmes will undoubtedly cost more, as contractors will have to maintain headquarters staffs and bear the costs involved in producing separate programmes. The probable total cost of putting on the I.T.A. programme in three regions has been estimated at £10 million.*

The basic assumption in estimating programme charges is that six minutes' commercial advertising will be allowed in each hour. There is no rigid unit of advertising time and a commercial can be a straight announcement such as "It's 10.30 and time to drink Milko" to a film demonstrating some mechanical gadget and lasting three or four minutes. It is expected that all com-

mercials will be on a film and that these will be of a great variety of lengths adapted to fit in with the type of programme preceding or following them. The programmes themselves will contain no advertising, the sole exceptions being commercial magazine programmes which will appear mainly in the afternoons and will not affect the 10 per cent. ratio.

The nearest that the programme contractors have yet got to fixing charges is in a letter that one of them has sent out to advertising agencies stating that the rates will be x , x plus varying sums, or x minus varying sums, according to the time of day. It is not easy to place a value on x at present. On the assumption that the programme contractors have to cover £10 million a year, however, the sum could work out as follows:

- 40 hours TV \times 6 minutes = 240 minutes of commercials each week.
- 240 minutes \times 52 = 12,480 minutes each year.
- 365 magazine hours charged at, say, 20 per cent. of full rates.

It is probable that the average charge will be about £1,000 a minute with £1,250 for peak hours and £750 for off peak times. A rate of £1,000 a minute is about £1 per thousand viewers. This means some £12½ million from the 10 per cent. ratio plus £3½ million from the magazine programmes giving a total of £16 million. This is undoubtedly too high for a start, and the contractors will be lucky if they collect the £12½ million yielded by an average rate of £1,000 a minute. The sum of about £12½ million likely to be spent on commercial television advertising should be looked at in relation to the total of £230 million spent on advertising of all kinds in 1953-54. The sum expected to be spent on television advertising represents only one-third of the additional

* See *The Economist*, December 4, 1954, "Television's Balance Sheet."

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advertising expenditure incurred in 1953-54.

There is no lack of optimism in the advertising world about the prospects for commercial television. New companies are being formed to make commercial films of all sizes. Established advertising agencies are putting the possibilities of television as a medium before their clients. It is expected that most of the bigger accounts will make an additional allocation for television. There is much talk of the advantage of getting in at the start and gaining experience now while rates are likely to be low and peak hours to be had for the asking. Whoever else may have doubts about commercial television the advertising agents are confident that a new age is about to dawn.

Most of the questions about commercial television cannot be answered until the end of the year. In any case all the really important decisions are outside the control of the I.T.A. If a Labour Government were to be returned to power while the new services were still in their early stages, would it close I.T.A. down? The mere threat of such action is having serious consequences on I.T.A., as it is the un-

doubted cause of the undue haste with which plans are being pushed forward. Again, what would be the effect of freeing newsprint so that advertisers could get all the space they wanted in the national dailies? Could they still be persuaded of the advantages of getting in at the start of commercial television?

But the most difficult question of all to answer is perhaps the one most likely to be overlooked. What is going to be the effect of all this on the B.B.C.? Will viewers remain faithful to the old faces or will they fall over themselves to convert their sets and look at commercial ones? This is the question that will decide the value of x in the advertisers' formula. Again, will the B.B.C. hold its present ground and try to compete for the mass audience or will it try for the "quality" audience of middle-class viewers? After all, purchasing power sells a wide range of goods—and advertisers.

To-day there is no way of knowing the answers to the I.T.A. questions. That is why, for the moment, I.T.A. is so much more interesting than the B.B.C.

RICHARD BAILEY.

THE STRANGE CASE OF THE SOVIET WRITERS

By EDWARD CRANKSHAW

FOR those whose business it is to read the signs, the story of what has been happening to Soviet literature since Stalin's death has not only been of absorbing interest in itself, but has also revealed more of the true nature of the struggle for political power than any other single aspect of Soviet life. Now that the

struggle has reached one of its major climaxes, with the victory of Khrushchev, the Party Secretary, over Malenkov, the late Prime Minister, a great deal of what was obscure in the Soviet literary world suddenly makes sense; and, at the same time, it illuminates the dark political stage.

After Stalin died there came a thaw.

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It was immensely dramatic. The reason why we have not heard more about it in this country is because politicians and commentators were so afraid of being taken in that they refused to look at what lay under their noses. Now that the thaw has been checked, these timid souls can pretend quite happily that everything is as it was and has never been any different—ignoring completely the remarkable things that went on between April 1953 and the early spring of 1954. This seems to me inexcusable, not only because it falsifies a critical period of Soviet history, but also because it deliberately blots out a major source of knowledge about the real state of mind of the Soviet people—not simply the inarticulate masses, but the high intelligentsia. And this knowledge is of no less importance to us than a constant awareness of, say, the eternal hostility of Leninism.

There is no room here to work in detail through the story of that thaw and the subsequent frost. We shall have to make do with an over-simplified outline. What happened was this.

After Stalin died the whole of Russia held its breath. Then Malenkov proclaimed his policy of conciliation—conciliation of the Soviet people far more importantly than of the outside world. At first there was no perceptible response. Russia remained frozen in sullen apathy. It seemed that nothing could penetrate that vast and stratified ice-sheet. Then, suddenly, miraculously, faint voices were heard. They came, as one would expect, from Leningrad, and they were like the first slight rustling of flowing water in an ice-bound landscape. For several months nothing much seemed to be happening; but gradually the sound of the waters grew, until suddenly the trickle was a flood, sweeping everything before it.

The first voice was that of a

poetess and critic, Olga Bergoltz, who came out with a personal statement about the importance of the heart. Nothing had been heard of the heart in Soviet literature for a very long time. The late Colonel-General Zhdanov had decreed that Soviet novelists and playwrights were to deal with positive heroes and the triumphs of Soviet construction. There were to be no doubts, no self-questionings, no acknowledgments of human error and frailty. There were to be only blueprints for an impossible society in which mankind subordinated itself to the machines and the statisticians and the planners—and liked it.

Miss Bergoltz summed this situation up, very moderately, in an April issue of *Literary Gazette*.

"In a great many of our lyrical works the most important thing of all is lacking: humanity, the human being. I don't mean there are no human beings in these poems. Indeed there are. There are also people engaged in specific occupations: there are the operators of bull-dozers and steam-shovels: there are horticulturalists; all carefully described, sometimes well and even brilliantly described. But they are described from the outside, and the most important thing is lacking in all these poems—a lyric hero with his own individual relationship to events and to the landscape."

She went on to lay bare the reasons for this. She attacked those critics (by which she meant all active critics) who accused poets of decadence and pessimism if they showed the slightest sign of awareness of the complexity of humankind. They will not even allow a character in a poem or a novel to experience grief at parting from a lover, she said, for grief is a negative emotion, a forbidden emotion. And even if, on occasion, it has to be expressed, then it is obligatory to

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counteract its enervating influence by the invocation of the constructive and the positive—"by, let us say, the overfulfilment of the hay-making plan on the part of the jilted lover."

Miss Bergoltz continued her good work, in other articles making enormous fun of the monstrosities put on the stage as plays and ballets in the name of Zhdanov. And soon she was joined by others. By the poet Alexander Tvardovsky, demanding sincerity and truth; by the poetess Vera Inber, declaring that nobody read Soviet poetry any more, and that she could not find it in her heart to blame them; by the critic Tarasenkov, who, demanding free discussion of all sorts of things, declared: "We forget that the truth is born in controversy, in the clash of opinions." By many others.

So far we have listened to individual voices. Between spring and autumn individual after individual was allowed to express what amounted to a revolutionary discontent with everything which had been making Soviet literature what it was; but there had been no official or quasi-official comment. When it came, it came with a rush. In October 1953 the Soviet Writer's Union held a plenary session to discuss the state of Soviet drama. It was presided over by Fadeyev, the novelist, who is in effect the Party Commissar for literature; and it met in the presence of Ponoramenko, then Minister of Culture. And here the assembled dramatists tore savagely, and with an outburst of pent-up feeling that could be felt almost physically, into everything that Zhdanovism in literature had stood for—into everything which, until a few months before, they had been lauding to the skies. They blamed themselves; but they were blaming themselves for writing what Zhdanov had told them to write. They gave thanks to the Party for its guidance; but in every-

thing they said they cursed the Party for its misguidance. And there was no question but that this outburst was officially prompted. It was led by the human weather-cock, Simonov, the accomplished but empty dramatist, who knows how to point into the Party line almost before it has been formulated. For years Simonov had been the self-appointed champion of Zhdanovism and the harshest and most heartless critic of anyone who slightly trespassed against it. He now demanded the rehabilitation of many works which, in the past, he had viciously condemned. After years of declaring that the general state of the drama in the Soviet Union was the best in the best possible of worlds, he now came out with the statement that it "had been in a state of backwardness for a number of years." The less political dramatists joined in. Mikhalkov said flatly that the Soviet drama was false. "Audiences," he said, "had been taught to see on the stage that which departs from the truth of life, from the real difficulties, misfortunes, joys, and sorrows of living Soviet people." Lavrenev was even more specific. He attacked the notorious *kolkhoz* plays and condemned roundly all those tedious works dealing with the building of dams and the irrigation of deserts. In one well-known play, he said, it was a solemn fact that a good deal of the dialogue consisted of straight extracts from a textbook on the oil industry. Others, he went on, could only be understood if the spectators took along to the theatre technical handbooks dealing with the industries under discussion. He was particularly hard on the feeble and inane attempts to import an element of dramatic conflict into plays where there could be no conflict because there were, quite simply, no human characters. He gave examples. "The agro-technician Vanya, who is

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deeply in love, has just married Tanya, the brigadier of the field station; and now he throws off his beloved wife as a backward element, because Tanya holds different views on the correct methods of clamping potatoes." This kind of thing, he said, "testifies to the author's fundamental lack of respect for his heroes, Soviet people." It has got to stop.

And, for a period, it did stop. The findings of the assembled dramatists in Moscow were fortified beyond measure by the personal challenge of Ilyya Ehrenburg, the novelist and publicist, one of the most gifted writers of the Soviet Union, and one, also, very close to the Party line. In the October number of *Znamya* he published his by now celebrated appeal for individuality and freedom of conscience, combined with an attack on the idea that books can be written to order. It was a moving document.

The thaw had now set in.

There had been protests even at the dramatists' congress. There had been voices rather surlily muttering that high-falutin talk about ideals and humanity was all very well, but the Party was the Party, and the writer's chief task was to assist it, as required, in building Communism. In the spring of 1954, after a winter of content, these voices were heard more loudly. It was clear that the thaw was by no means necessarily final. And, although the waters still flowed, there were frosts at night, and some of the tributary streams were frozen over. All through the first half of 1954 there appeared to be a struggle in progress behind the scenes. A number of writers were attacked for obeying too literally Malenkov's demands for satire on contemporary evils. Others were told they confused freedom with licence. One or two, who had offended, were expelled from the Union of Writers, not for what they

had written but, ostensibly, because of their private morals. Then, in the summer, came the big counter-attack, when the playwright Zorin was pilloried unmercifully for his play, called *The Guests*, which satirized bluntly and boldly a character called Peter Kirpichev, whose name has now passed into Soviet mythology—a typical hard-boiled, callous, careerist product of the régime. Zorin's great sin was not that he had drawn this particular character. It was admitted that the Kirpichevs existed: what could not be admitted was that they were in any way an inevitable product of Soviet society. They were survivals of the *bourgeois* past, to be rooted out and held up as terrible examples. Zorin, in suggesting otherwise, had betrayed the Revolution.

And then, later, came Ehrenburg's own novel called, precisely, *The Thaw*—not a very good novel, obviously written in great haste; but a highly symbolical affair, which, while celebrating the power of the human heart over outward circumstances, was clearly intended as a fairly elaborate parable of the sweeping away of Stalinism. It came too late. It was violently attacked by Simonov (who had already distinguished himself by attacking Zorin's *The Guests* after first praising it). Ehrenburg was allowed to reply. He replied with some dignity, though clearly hedging. Simonov returned to the attack. The official *Literary Gazette* endorsed the attack. The book remained in print in a limited edition; but it was still-born. So was the thaw.

But not quite. It is to be doubted if things can ever be quite the same again. The Russian writers, and the Russian public, have had a glimpse of the truth about themselves. Innumerable individuals have had it revealed

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to them that their own secret disgusts and longings are shared by others, whom they have always regarded as hard and fast supporters of the régime. The effect of this revelation must be very great.

This story, the story of the thaw and the subsequent frost, may be parallel in time with the struggle between Khrushchev and Malenkov. It was in November 1953 that Khrushchev first openly took the offensive against Malenkov by dismissing the man who held the key citadel of Leningrad on Malenkov's behalf. Since then the developments in the Soviet literary world have reflected with remarkable precision the ups and downs in the Malenkov-Khrushchev fight.

The story is not finished. When, in December, the writers held their first All-Union Congress for two decades, Khrushchev had virtually won his

struggle. But the writers did not return to where they had been before. The Party had asserted itself. This was forbidden, that was forbidden; but, all the same, the air was lighter than it had been before the thaw set in. It seems pretty clear that even the harshest elements among the Party leaders are aware of the damaging effects of the Stalinist blight and are eager for the writers to develop and bear fruit. At the same time they are desperately afraid that the spirit shown in the year of the thaw may all too easily get out of hand. So they are trying to have things both ways: to control the writers with one hand, to encourage them with the other. Obviously this cannot work. In the long run there must either be stern repression or something very like freedom. The struggle is still in being.

EDWARD CRANKSHAW.

FORMOSA

By DENYS SMITH

AMERICAN policy on Formosa was no sudden improvisation to meet an unexpected situation. It was closely studied and long deliberated. Its roots go back to the meeting of the National Security Council held last September 12 at Denver, Colorado, where Eisenhower was spending his summer vacation. The reason for calling this conference was that Chinese Communist attacks on Nationalist-held off-shore islands had been resumed the previous month after a lull since 1949. At the same time Communist propaganda attacks on the United States had been intensified and threats to capture Formosa resumed. The logic of past experience fortified the conclusion that an assault

upon a new salient of the Western world was about to be undertaken. After the Korean armistice came the intensified fighting in Indo-China, so now the fighting had ended in Indo-China intensified efforts to take Formosa seemed very probable. There were also reports of breaches of the Korean armistice showing Communist contempt for and indifference to world opinion. Intelligence reports added further confirmation. Mao and Chou En-lai were "feeling their oats." They had beaten sixteen nations to a standstill in Korea and gained a victory in Indo-China. Moreover, they had domestic difficulties. The Chinese peasants were disillusioned over agrarian reform. The factory workers

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had long hours and low pay. There had been damaging floods reducing the food supply, but grain was still being exported to Russia, Czechoslovakia, and elsewhere. Under such conditions it is almost axiomatic that despotic governments should seek to stifle discontent by foreign adventure and feed the public on tales of military success or foreign threats, if they could not be fed on rice or bread.

There appeared to be no need for immediate emergency action. Quemoy was being bombarded, but this was interpreted as a premature flourish designed more to influence the conference on the Manila Pact, which started on September 6, than to inaugurate a major assault on Formosa. A carefully thought out programme was possible. The base upon which it rested was that Formosa must not fall into unfriendly hands. There was nothing new about this. The new element was a decision to make America's determination to defend it perfectly plain. It was held that Communist aggression in Korea would never have occurred if the Communists had known in advance that it would be resisted by the United States. Therefore the United States would make certain that there would be no miscalculation of the same kind about Formosa. Arguing whether Formosa really is "essential" to American security becomes little more than an exercise in semantics. Is it essential to British security that the French channel ports be in friendly hands? They were not during the last war and Britain survived. America would undoubtedly survive if Formosa were lost, but American security would be weakened. Moreover, its loss would send a psychological shudder throughout the remainder of free Asia and strengthen the Communist cause from Japan and the Philippines to South-East Asia and

India. Since American security concepts were ignored or held erroneous by large bodies of foreign opinion, caution had to be exercised in proclaiming America's determination to hold Formosa, to avoid even the appearance of truculence or belligerency, which would feed the fires of foreign Yankeephobia.

One important element in the Denver programme was the negotiation of a mutual defence treaty with Chiang. Dulles had broached the subject with Chiang when he passed through Formosa on his way from Manila. This would place American determination to defend Formosa on a treaty basis linked with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. The reverse side of the defence treaty medal was that it would put the United States in a stronger position to restrain Chiang from any attack on the mainland. There was a little noticed shift of American naval units from the Atlantic to the Pacific, also decided at this meeting. American determination to defend Formosa would be expressed by a Presidential message and a supporting Congressional resolution, to show that the country was united behind the President. This fitted the domestic political situation. Truman's action both in assigning troops to Europe and in entering the Korean War without advance Congressional approval had been criticized. If the President did not ask for advance Congressional approval, opposition based on constitutional grounds might have been mistaken abroad for opposition to the substance of the President's Formosa policy.

As well as securing the maximum American support, the Denver Conference considered ways of securing maximum support of the outside world. America's purpose was to retain Formosa, not to fight the Chinese Com-

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munists. In fact the main purpose of the programme was to avoid having to fight them by removing any chances of miscalculation. The United States could make this clear by showing a readiness to achieve the desired result by other means such as a cease-fire arranged through the United Nations. A preliminary step, however, was to make sure that Chiang would not invoke the veto power held by Nationalist China on the Security Council to block any cease-fire discussion. The Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, Walter Robertson, was sent to confer with Chiang in October and secured his agreement to a cease-fire attempt and to other features of the Administration programme. One of these was the evacuation of the Tachen islands outpost to shorten Chiang's military line and improve the defences of more important areas near Formosa, such as Quemoy and Matsu islands. This cease-fire agreement with Chiang, as well as the defence treaty, implied that Chiang's hopes of returning to the mainland by force had to be abandoned. Chiang was still recognized as head of the only lawful Chinese Government. If, as many Americans believe, there was dissension and popular unrest in Communist China, his opportunity might come in time. The Nationalist Government had a continuing role to play in keeping alive the idea of an alternative Government to that of the Communists. Put brutally, the American position was that Chiang should be an instrument of American policy. America would not be an instrument of Chiang's.

Once Chiang's assurances on the cease-fire proposal had been obtained the United States began a series of discussions with the British and New Zealand Governments. New Zealand was the only other Commonwealth

country on the Security Council. By the end of the year the United States were ready for events to determine the timing of the parallel warning and cease-fire moves. The United States would have nothing to lose either way. If the cease-fire move proved successful Formosa would be protected with U.N. backing. If it failed (as in the event it did) it would be clear that the blame must lie on the Communist doorstep. It is not quite clear how the Communist imprisonment of the captured American fliers fitted into the picture. Some believe that the Communists hoped that as long as they were held as hostages public sentiment in the United States would force the American Government to adopt a conciliatory tone in order not to jeopardize their chances of release. The Communist capture of Ichang island, about eight miles north of the Tachens, indicating that the Communists were ready to move, was the trigger which put the parallel Denver policy moves into motion.

The American programme was discussed in general terms with Congressional leaders, including the Democrats who now control Congress, and met with their approval. Both Congressional leaders and military advisers agreed that if the hope that America's determined stand would deter the Communists proved unfounded, then the United States would not adopt the kind of handicap which frustrated its forces during the Korean campaign. Next time there would be no "privileged sanctuary." This view had been strengthened by statements from Generals Clark, Van Fleet, Stratemeyer, Almond and Admiral Joy to the Senate Sub-Committee on Internal Security during August to December last year. These senior military commanders in the Korean theatre agreed, in short, that victory in Korea was

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possible and desirable, that the action required to achieve victory would not have brought on a major war, that the rules were rigged though Allied pressure (mainly that of the Attlee Government) to make certain China would not be defeated. They were also united in the hope that the United States would never again be called upon to hazard her troops under similar circumstances. General Almond summed it up with the statement : "It is bad enough to have to fight the enemy. It is terrible to have to fight both the enemy and those that you are supposed to have support from."

If Congress was to authorize the President's use of American armed forces to defend Formosa, it should therefore also authorize them to be used in areas related to its defence. The plan at first was to mention Quemoy and Matsu islands, which are, so to speak, corks bottling up the Communist invasion ports of Amoy and Foochow. But this was abandoned as being both too precise and too limiting. If air attacks were launched from mainland bases there should be nothing to prevent "hot pursuit," or if necessary destruction of the mainland bases. So a more general phrase, "related positions and territories now in friendly hands," was used. To have stated definitely that the United States would defend Quemoy and Matsu islands would have weakened the legal basis of American policy. The President, therefore, said he was not suggesting that "the United States enlarge its defensive obligations beyond Formosa and the Pescadores." He took his stand on the strongest legal and moral grounds, on a position which both Senator Knowland and Mr. Eden could support.

The resolution sped through the House in a single day with only three opposition votes (one of the three

thought the resolution did not go far enough). A few days later the Senate also adopted it with only three opposition votes. But before the Senate vote was taken the resolution ran into trouble. It had political overtones. There was the implied criticism that Truman was at fault for not seeking advance Congressional authority in Korea. There was the fact that advance approval would preclude any later criticism of the President if hostilities broke out. Democrats would share the responsibility and the blame and thus be handicapped in the Presidential elections next year. There is also a lot of the old isolationist Adam still present in the Senate, though it only finds formal expression in Senator Langer. This was all in the background. The actual arguments used by the small handful of opponents were different. They complained that the resolution would authorize the President to conduct "preventive war," that it would enable Chiang (or alternatively some "trigger-happy" theatre commander) to drag the United States into war which constitutionally could only be declared by Congress. Finally, while everybody agreed that Formosa and the Pescadores should be defended as vital to American security, there was no need to authorize the use of American forces to protect territorial areas of China which could be construed as intervening in the Chinese civil war. Influential newspaper commentators were also critical. Walter Lippmann wrote : "Congress when it makes a declaration of war does not specify, as does this resolution, what is to be the strategic plan of the war. No one need doubt that if an invasion force threatening the conquest of Formosa were building up in the Chinese ports the authority to defend Formosa would carry with it the authority to take preventive measures."

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The first two objections were so far-fetched that they were more debating points than arguments. But they disturbed the President and his advisers because of the effect they would have abroad, particularly among the "neutralists" who might not recognize, or would deliberately shut their eyes to, their absurdity. Every foreigner would not say, as Eden did : "We in this country respect President Eisenhower and know that he would sanction the use of United States forces only with the greatest reluctance." After a formal White House statement that American forces would only be used defensively, and that any decision to use them would be one which Eisenhower would make personally and not delegate, they ceased to have value even as debating points. The third objection was more serious and genuine. But it was put into perspective by Senator George, who found himself in the unexpected position of denouncing some of his Democratic colleagues for irresponsible attacks on the policy of a Republican President. Their speeches "have been disturbing foreign chancelleries . . . play right down the line of Communist propaganda." Some people wanted the United States to draw a line beyond which was an enemy sanctuary. "Let us say that wherever the enemy is we will strike. . . We would be the laughing-stock of mankind if we said we would not interfere until we saw the enemy actually putting his foot on the shores of Formosa."

As this is written the United States can feel gratified that its purpose of keeping Formosa from Communist hands without widening the gap which already existed between American and British Far East policies has been achieved. On the central question of Formosa the British and American Government's understanding is the

same ; it is not legally part of China, so that recognition of the Communist régime does not imply that the Communist claim to possess it should be supported, Mr. Attlee notwithstanding. Britain, so Americans think, is the last nation to maintain with any consistency that geographical propinquity gives a claim to possession. Britain herself is holding a Chinese "off-shore" island, Hongkong, and resists claims of the Argentine to the Falklands, Greece to Cyprus, and for that matter Spain to Gibraltar, which the argument of geographical propinquity would support. The query, "How would the British feel if a rival government were in the Isle of Wight," is felt to be about as pertinent as asking, "How does France feel about British occupation of the French off-shore islands of Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney and Sark?"

America holds that the legal position of Formosa has never been settled. Japan renounced all title to it in the Japanese peace treaty, but sovereignty was not transferred elsewhere. The three-power Cairo statement and subsequent three-power Potsdam declaration have no legal significance. Chiang went into Formosa to accept the Japanese surrender and remained in effective control of the area in the same way as Russia remained in control of South Sakhaline and the Kuriles. Molotov's statement that the trouble was due to the fact that "the United States with the aid of Chiang Kai-chek several years ago seized the island of Formosa which belongs to China, the Pescadores and several other islands," is treated as an absurd travesty of the true facts.

As for the future, Americans expect an uneasy stalemate to arise, with no formal cease-fire and no major Communist military attack. But there is one thing about which America is thoroughly determined and the sooner the rest of the world realizes it the

better. Formosa will remain in friendly hands or in American hands. Any hope or thought of transferring it by

devious routes to the Chinese Communists is out of the question.

DENYS SMITH.

GEOPOLITICS OF THE ATOMIC AGE

By JOHN BIGGS-DAVISON

A STAFF College lecture in any N.A.T.O. country to-day might begin something like this : "The most remarkable contrast in the political map of modern Europe is that presented by the vast area of Russia occupying half the Continent and the group of smaller territories tenanted by the Western Powers."

These words were spoken by Sir Halford Mackinder in 1904, when lecturing to the Royal Geographical Society on the geopolitics of the "Post-Columbian" Age. In a closed and contracted world, the lecturer declared, "every explosion of social forces, instead of being dissipated in a surrounding circuit of unknown space and barbaric chaos, will be sharply re-echoed from the far side of the globe, and weak elements in the political and economic organism of the world will be shattered in consequence. There is a vast difference of effect in the fall of a shell into an earthwork and its fall amid the closed space and rigid structure of a great building or ship. Probably some half-consciousness of this fact is at last diverting some of the attention of statesmen in all parts of the world from territorial expansion to the struggle for relative efficiency."

Mackinder divided not Gaul, but the world, into three parts. His Pivot Region was the almost endless expanse of Eurasia. Ships could not penetrate its fastnesses, but the railway was

supplanting the horsed nomad and the cameleer. Secondly, there was an Inner Crescent, containing the Germanic Empires of Berlin and Vienna, Turkey, India and China. Thirdly, an Outer Crescent comprised Great Britain, South Africa, Australia, North America and Japan. If the balance of power moved in favour of the Pivot Region, this would be followed by expansion into what he termed the marginal territories, or the marginal region. The Pivot Region would enjoy less mobility than that of the surrounding marginal and insular countries, but a single Eurasian system, based it might be upon a Russo-German combination, would dispose of the means to build a great high seas fleet and make an attempt at world mastery.

Just as serious study of, for example, the syndicalist conception of a Corporative State has been hindered by the passions which Fascism incited or aroused, so Geopolitics passed into partial disrepute when Mackinder's theories were perverted to Nazi purposes by Major-General Karl Haushofer's Institute of Geopolitics at Munich. In the face of present dangers, however, the non-Communist Powers could use and adapt a theoretical apparatus as comprehensive as the Marxist myth and certainly more realistic and more justified by events.

Mackinder stated that "every event takes place both in space and time, so

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it has both a geographical and an historical aspect." As he told the Royal Geographical Society half a century ago, the balance of political power is a product of geographical conditions. By "geographical" he implied not only the physical and spatial character of a territorial Power, but its population, its virility and capabilities, and the organization and equipment it mustered relatively to those of its competitors.

He did not pretend to cast a horoscope upon the rise and fall of empires or prophesy the fate of nations. He provided formulæ and principles which have their use and relevance to the strategy of to-day. Geopolitics is no exact science. Yet it has to its credit, and to that of Professor Haushofer, a prediction in 1921, in his *The Japanese Empire in its Geographical Development*, of the attack on Pearl Harbour twenty years later.

In 1919 Sir Halford Mackinder brought out *Democratic Ideals and Reality*. Written in the aftermath of the First World War, it became the best known of his works, and was reproduced during the Second World War as a Pelican Book. In it the Pivot Land is renamed the Heartland and the principle proclaimed that

Who rules Eastern Europe commands the Heartland.

Who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island.

Who rules the World-Island commands the World.

The World-Island is the great land mass of the three continents which meet in the Middle East.

Mackinder's theories were a corrective to Mahan, the eloquent exponent of that British sea-power which shielded the infancy of his own country, the United States, as well as the free trade and the possessions of England. Great

Britain owed her greatness and her position as a World Power not merely to wooden walls, ironclads and hearts of oak, but to fertile fields and rich mineral deposits. Nor did her industrial and inventive lead in the 18th and 19th centuries confer assurance of permanent advantage. Other Powers called in the fiscal weapons of the State and followed our example in building fleets as well as armies. In the ancient world it was from the Eurasian Heartland that the precious civilizations of the Mediterranean basin were eroded and trampled down. The German Empire before the First, the Soviet Empire since the Second, World War have from continental resources founded high seas fleets to seize at an appropriate moment the sceptre of the seas from what Mackinder called the insular Powers.

When Mackinder spoke to the Royal Geographical Society in 1904, Mr. L. S. Amery took part in the ensuing discussion and predicted that "the relative merits of railways and ships as a means of mobility would be altered by the use of the air as a means of locomotion." The decision would in the future lie with industrial power and the power of invention and of science. Time has proved him right. The possession by the United States of supremacy in atomic weapons safeguarded half of Europe from subjection to the Heartland Power. Immune from naval attack, that Power is vulnerable to aerial bombardment from the sea, still commanded by the insular Powers, America and Britain, and from bases in the Inner Crescent. America's lead in atomic weapons has preserved for a space the African and Western European lands of the World-Island, and a British hydrogen bomber force will make our small island less vulnerable compared with the Continental Powers. Yet nuclear weapons

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may prove a wasting asset and the emphasis shift from deterrence to home defence, to other forms of warfare, including the political and economic struggle.

Mackinder, then, was not far wrong when he declared, in the course of an article contributed to *Foreign Affairs* in July, 1943, that, although "the conquest of the air gave the world's unity a new significance for all mankind, no adequate proof has yet been presented that air fighting will not follow the long history of all kinds of warfare by presenting alternations of offensive and defensive tactical superiority, meanwhile effecting few permanent changes in strategical conditions." He claimed enhanced validity for his theory after twenty or forty years. He identified the U.S.S.R. with the Heartland and referred to the depth and strength it received from "Lenaland," the territory drained by the Lena River into the Arctic Ocean. Since 1943 America's failure to sustain Chiang Kai-shek in China has brought strong Soviet influence, though not direct Soviet rule, to the Pacific shore of the World-Island.

Besides the Heartland, Mackinder named three other great strategic areas of the globe; the North Atlantic basin and two regions described as "the mantle of vacancies." These are the tropical and what we now call "under-developed" regions of South America and Africa, and the monsoon lands of India and China. The problem of power lay in the balance between these areas. Germany could be kept in check by an "embankment of power" in the North Atlantic basin on one side, and on the other in a Heartland which was "the greatest natural fortress on earth" and could close its gates to the German invader.

The present preoccupation of S.H.A.P.E. is to hold the western pro-

montories of the World-Island and to form a German "embankment of power" against further expansion by the Heartland Power. To the south-east of the World-Island the United States, the British Commonwealth, and the French Union are confronted with a balance of forces gravely upset by the advance of China, backed by Russia, into monsoon China and other "marginal" Asian territories. The rebuilding of Japan and the containment, neutralization or detachment of China, have accordingly become the aims of various of the Western Powers.

A stable settlement in the Far East is bound up with peace in Europe. The World-Island is one, but Germany is a more decisive area than is the Far East. In *Democratic Ideals and Reality* Mackinder wrote that "the condition of stability in the territorial rearrangement of East Europe is that the division should be into three and not into two State-systems. It is a vital necessity that there should be a tier of independent States between Germany and Russia." He was writing of the peace which was to follow the war of 1914-18. Since then Europe has been overshadowed by the two World Powers and the idea of a single European unity largely prompted by Soviet expansion and American support in resisting it. A future United Europe should, however, be sufficiently flexible to allow of regional combination to the east of Germany, and the States of Central and Eastern Europe which have suffered first German, then Soviet, conquest and enslavement must regain freedom of action if any settlement is to endure.

In 1905 Mackinder wrote an article for *The National Review* on "Man-Power as a Measure of National and Imperial Strength." This, it is believed, may have been the first use of the term "man-power"—a phrase which for Mackinder comprehended not only

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the idea of fighting strength, but also that of productivity. Perceiving as clearly as he did the economic roots of military power, he believed in a balanced development of national economies and the preservation of such a "going concern" as the British Empire. He considered that free trade of the *laissez-faire* type and "predatory protection" of the German type both made for war. In 1937, ten years before his death, Sir Halford said that a shrunken world was being polarized and "panicked into rival ideologies, 'communist' to embrace all the world in a single community, and 'nationalist' to find safety in the self-sufficiency of each of a number of regional communities." Schachtian economics were undoubtedly a nationalistic retort to economic internationalism.

Mackinder commended the young American Republic for using its fiscal independence of the Motherland to pursue Alexander Hamilton's ideal of a balanced national development. "This does not in the least imply that a great international trade should not be done, but it should be a trade so controlled that the effect of it is always

towards the balance aimed at, and is not accumulating, beyond hope of recovery, economic one-sidedness." Nations, he knew, would no longer consent to be hewers of wood and drawers of water in a Cobdenite specialization. "For the contentment of nations we must contrive to secure some equality of opportunity for national development."

Within the Western Alliance the establishment of balanced and expanding economies is of the first strategic importance. Western European Union must become a developing group of mutual economic support and stimulation. The French economy must be reformed within a unity of friendly sovereignties. The Commonwealth must realize the economic significance of that proud title, and distribute more widely its strategic resources of skilled man-power and essential industry, at present dangerously over-concentrated in the British Isles. Sir Halford Mackinder described much of Africa as a Southern Heartland. Given the will and given time, Eurafica could provide a potential balance to Eurasia.

JOHN BIGGS-DAVISON.

ESSAY ON PROSE. III.

By WALTER DE LA MARE

EXAMPLES of this kind of prose written by a man of a vivid and sensuous imagination, and about his childhood, could hardly be too numerous. The early chapters of Ruskin's *Praeterita* for example; or Edmund Gosse's *Father and Son*; or Bewick's Memoirs, or that book of books, *Memories of Childhood*, by a Russian writer retired from Government Service—Serge Aksakoff—exploring in no fewer than 400 pages a sexagenarian's granary confined to the first eight years of his life. Or last,

W. H. Hudson's enchanting *Far Away and Long Ago*. Of this prose Joseph Conrad said, "it grows like the grass"; and Hudson himself, that it had attained its simplicity after a long and difficult *détour*. In an early chapter he tells of a child he knew, when he himself was six, in his home on the pampas of La Plata:

I disliked the whole tribe except a little girl of about eight, a child, it was said, of one of the unmarried sisters. . . . I used to see her almost every day, for though a child she was out on horseback

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early and late, riding bare-backed and boy fashion, flying about the plain bare-footed and bare-legged, in her thin old cotton frock, her raven-black hair flying loose behind. The strangest thing in her was her whiteness: her beautifully chiselled face was like alabaster, without a freckle or a trace of colour in spite of the burning hot sun and wind she was constantly exposed to. She was also extremely lean, and strangely serious for a little girl; she never laughed and rarely smiled. Her name was Angela, and she was called Anjelita, the affectionate diminutive, but I doubt that much affection was ever bestowed on her.

To my small boy's eyes, she was a beautiful being with a cloud on her, and I wished it had been in my power to say something to make her laugh and forget, though but for a minute, the many cares and anxieties which made her so unnaturally grave for a little girl. Nothing proper to say ever came to me, and if it had come it would no doubt have remained unspoken. . . . And so it came about that I said no word to white-faced Anjelita, and in due time she vanished out of my life with all that queer tribe of hers, the bloody uncle included, to leave an enduring image in my mind which has never quite lost a certain disturbing effect.

Apart from this faculty of re-living by reflex in the senses actual experiences of the past, the imagination also possesses the power of giving apparent realization to the experiences of other men. To achieve this, its possessor must transmute as it were their words into sensuous personal experience, and then translate that experience back again into his own words.

As a very rudimentary example the following is a purely workaday letter addressed by a wily Japanese merchant to a western client. In mere grammar and syntax it may fall a little short of perfection, but in grossly subtle insight into human nature, that of Mr. B., it could hardly be excelled:

Regarding the matter of escaping penalty for non-delivery of the freezing machine, there is a way to creep round same by diplomat, and we must make statement of big strike occur in our factory (of course big untrue). Please address my firm in enclosed form of letter and believe this will avoid penalty of case. As Mr B. is most religious and competent man, and also heavily upright and godly, it fears me useless to apply for his signature. Please attach same by Yokohama office, making force, but no cause to fear prison happening, as this is often operated by other merchants of highest integrity. It is highest unfortunate Mr B. so god-like and excessive awkward for business purpose. I think much better add little serpentlike wisdom to upright manhood and thus found a good business edifice.

Within certain limits perceived but ignored by the disobliging Mr. B., it is his business-associate's *kind* of imagination—that of penetrating, divining, realizing and recording the nature and experience of others—which is a sovereign grace of course in the writer of biography or history. The historian is chiefly concerned with the marshalling, arrangement and presentation of data — approximate matter-of-fact: derived from documents, records, memorials, books. For this he needs judgment, method, rationality, erudition, comprehension. But as soon as he attempts to realize and portray any earthly figure or scene that has been committed to the past (and that occurs swiftly enough!) he must invoke his own sensuous memory to give light and life and semblance and presentness to his record of that figure or scene. Nor can he rightly interpret men's actions until he has in some degree divined the aims, ideas, feelings, habits of thought that were their incentives. How can that record but be, then, to some extent partial and fallacious?

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To write to-day, for example, of men and events of this century's first decade, with a mind entirely unaffected by what has since intervened, would be a miracle of forgetfulness. Thus to delete the ideas, events, discoveries, philosophies, ideals, of the intervening centuries, and to write of men and women, our own ancestry scores of centuries ago, and in so doing make fully realizable their conceptions of human life and destiny must, surely, be an insuperable achievement. And how actually appeared this globe of ours to its *habitués* before the arrival of the tyrant, Man? For how long after the Fall, one wonders, did Eden bewail his exile. As History has made his bed for well or ill, so we must lie on it; and the great writers and less great writers have much improved its mattress. Even the fairest and most erudite of historians cannot but be the victim of a certain bias. Would, for simple example, say, Sterne's or Jane Austen's portrait-in-words of Henry VIII be even on nodding terms with that of the exiled Kaiser? Can we not faintly surmise what Mr. Belloc's Julius Cæsar thinks of Mr. Wells's? Do we not so surmise by comparing our own restricted little conception of Julius Cæsar with our conception of Mr. Belloc's and Mr. Wells's?

The prose of history is in general objective, dignified, deliberate, free from the extravagances of enthusiasm and prejudice, and the flowers of fancy. It is as far as may be impersonal. Yet at its best, as at its worst, it cannot but show itself to be the work of an individual mind and coloured with his imagination.

More original and capricious in its workings than the power of representing actual experience of past events, or scenes, or dead and gone men and women, is yet another faculty of

the imagination—that not only of re-arranging, combining, transmuting experience, whether of wake or dream, and so inventing scenes and characters, but seemingly summoning such "creatures," momentarily or enduring, from the deep. To this kind of writing, we give the name of fiction, whether romantic or realistic, and whether its form be that of prose or verse. Here, once more, however objective the treatment of his theme, the tale-teller, the novelist, cannot possibly keep himself out of his story. It is dyed through and through with his own experiences and interests, habits of mind, character, humour and imagination.

So with the rest. Still looking at literature in its personal aspects—between history or biography and fiction we have the historical romance, between fiction and autobiography the essay. An historical romance compact of action, impulse, colour, variety, is composed in part of the fabric of history, and in part of fancy, imagination and sentiment. The essay, again, may consist to some extent of matter-of-fact, but its charm as literature depends on the individual ideas, feelings, moods, fantasies and inventions expressed in it by its author; whatever in fact he can make appropriate. So, too, in a similar relation as that between History and historical romance, is the sermon in its relation, as Cardinal Newman pointed out, to the science of Theology and to dogma. Unless the preacher has put himself both mind and heart into his words, how shall they touch the minds and hearts of his listeners?

At its highest, indeed, though it may be convenient to call the imagination a faculty of the mind, it is, rather, a rare and very valuable state and condition of the mind: in the *service* neither of the Reason nor the Will. If it were how could we account for the failure

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of so large a fraction of the work of Wordsworth and Coleridge, or for the few sudden lovely revelations of its influence in that of poets far less richly gifted than they and usually devoid of it? There comes the unique moment, and the secret flame ignites the coal. Examples of this creative, divining, transfiguring, poetic power of the imagination are to our infinite good fortune not far to seek.

That there are distinct orders of Angels, John Donne declares, assuredly I believe, but what they are I cannot tell. . . . They are creatures that have not so much of a body as flesh is, as froth is, as a vapour is, as a sigh is: and yet with a touch they shall moulder a rock into less atoms than the sand that it stands upon, and a millstone into smaller flour that it grinds. They are creatures made, and yet not a minute older than when they were first made, if they were made before all measure of time begun; nor, if they were made in the beginning of time, and be now six thousand years old, have they one wrinkle of age in their face, one sob of weariness in their lungs. They are *primogeniti Dei*, God's eldest sons; they are super-elementary meteors; they hang between the nature of God and the nature of man and are of middle condition. And (if we may offencelessly express it so) they are *enigmata divina*, the Riddles of Heaven and perplexities of speculation.

And Jeremy Taylor: this familiar fragment also from a sermon:

As when the sun approaches towards the gates of the morning he first opens a little eye of heaven, and sends away the spirits of darkness, and gives light to a cock, and calls up the lark to matins, and by and by gilds the fringes of a cloud, and peeps over the Eastern hills, thrusting out his golden horns . . . and still, while a man tells the story, the sun gets up higher, till he shows a fair face and a full light, and then he shines one whole day, under a cloud often, and

sometimes weeping great and little showers, and sets quickly; So is man's season and his life.

And last, that unforgettable fragment of Sir William Temple's:

When all is done, human life is, at the greatest and the best, but like a froward child, that must be played with and humoured a little to keep it quiet till it falls asleep, and then the care is over.

If Jeremy Taylor's spirits of darkness, and those golden horns of sunshine are not *mere* copies of sensuous experience, Donne's angels, whencesoever their origin, are even more fully and strangely of his own imaginative creation (or, is it realization?). In one of those plain simple statements which launch the mind on boundless seas Cardinal Newman remarked (indeed) that we know less of animals than of angels. And this despite the fact that nowadays it would seem our anxious knowledge of the fossilized bones of creatures millions of years extinct vastly exceeds our concern with faërie, once the vitalizing delight.

John Donne tells us in his prose what his angels are, chiefly by telling us what they are not. By way of his words we divine this vision of his imagination and accept of it all that we are capable of accepting. Incomparably fainter our own imaginative faculty may be. We none the less create out of his words our angels. Do we actually see them? I think not. They affect the spirit within us, rather, as do distant mountains brooding together on a vast un-earthly horizon in the cold twilight of dawn; presences of supreme mightiness yet of peace. And how remote they are in effect from the angels of Botticelli, though not so remote from those of Dürer or of Leonardo.

According to our convictions and to our conceptions of life and of our Uni-

ESSAY ON PROSE. III.

verse, we shall credit or discredit their relation to any "reality." But if Donne had not realized such beings in vision in his imagination, he could not thus have portrayed them in his prose. And I confess the phrase "in his imagination" is one that at the same time intensely interests and almost wholly baffles me. We may believe at any rate that such experiences and that such records of them may be intimations of a further state of being and of its Real, that man is gifted with senses of the spirit as well as with those of the body. In so saying, indeed, one is expressing only the very rudiments of the faith of the mystics, if not that of all the great imaginative writers.

However that may be, this fragment of prose conveys *not* scientific matter-of-fact, but matter-of-truth—Donne's personal truth—even if we dismiss his angels as unworthy of the attention of practical men. Further yet, even if we question the absolute sincerity and conviction of its writer, its qualities as literature remain past denial; that astonishing vigour and energy of mind, its isolation and solemnity, the range of intellect, the smouldering fervour of heart.

So also in our quotation from Jeremy Taylor. How exquisite a radiance shines in it, like that from a multitude of candles beneath the arches of his mind—the light not only of all his earthly suns at their uprisings and their downsettings, but also of the eyes with which he surveyed them. What a delicacy of mere seeing and sensuousness indeed is revealed in those spirits of darkness (whom we detect and perceive but cannot scrutinize), those Eastern hills and golden horns. With how serene and compassionate a gesture he sums up this mortal life of ours, bidding it a farewell in words as near to pure music as English words can approach. These things, so touched

and so transfigured, are not of our world, but of his; though through and by his words we may in part share them with him.

And yet, were not Tyndall's precious stones remotely of this kind?

Have the diamond, the amethyst, and the countless other crystals formed in the laboratories of Nature and of man no structure? Assuredly they have; but what can the microscope make of it? Nothing.

And Huxley's germ?

And then it is as if a delicate finger traced out the line to be occupied by the spinal column, and moulded the contour of the body; pinching up the head at one end, and tail at the other, and fashioning flesh and limb into due proportions in so artistic a way that, after watching the process hour by hour, one is almost involuntarily possessed by the notion that some more subtle aid to vision than an achromatic would show the hidden artist, with his plan before him, striving with skilful manipulation to perfect his work.

Indeed, does not every expression of the rarest science—the moment it is touched with an inner humanity—affect our minds in some degree with a sense of magic and mystery resembling that conveyed by the words which record the furthest journeys of the imagination—the words of the finest and profoundest fiction and poetry? And does not Sir William Temple, as if almost in heedless play, pacify the restless dreams and aspirations of which the undeviatingly austere record of science is the soberest proof and witness? How many times, I wonder, in our actual experience has each one of us been vaguely or sharply conscious of that tired forward child of his.

As purely and freely as water from a well must this image have been drawn up into the reverie in which he wrote these lines. Yet so vivid is this phan-

tasmal child in his solitude and beauty, that we ourselves, as we read, are for the while reconciled to the cares and troubles and perplexities and even disillusionments of life, and may even

rejoice that we shall some day come to a like peace. For a brief moment, all our own care, too, is over.

WALTER DE LA MARE.

FIFTY YEARS AGO

IN March 1905, *The National Review* published an article on Canada, entitled "The Great Dominion." This was written by Lady Minto, who had recently returned from Canada where her husband had been Governor-General. She began with a pointed reference to her own compatriots:—

The first impression which strikes the traveller on his return to England, and more especially to London, after visiting his Majesty's dominions beyond the seas . . . must surely be the lamentable ignorance displayed by the great majority of persons with regard to them. This may, perhaps, be to some extent explained, though it can hardly be excused, by the consideration that the struggle to keep pace with the rush and excitement of daily existence in a city of six million inhabitants, the chief market of the world, and in many respects the very centre of civilization, is of so absorbing a nature as to cause those who live in her midst to be serenely content that their lot has been so cast. Proud of their own superiority, they are indifferent to the welfare of the rest of mankind. To them indeed all things outside the limited horizon which their own apathy has created are of no account, and of but little interest.

It is sad to realize how insular and narrow is the individual who praises God that he is not as other men are, and who, with no experience, no knowledge of the world beyond his own fireside, presumes to judge them.

The traveller returns home full of eagerness to recount his experiences, but the manifest indifference of his

listeners checks his enthusiasm; a chill of disappointment envelops him, and what he knows to be concrete possibilities fade before a mist of doubt and prejudice.

It must be deeply mortifying to our colonial kinsmen on visiting England to find that practically nothing is known of the country of their birth; and to Canadians in particular does this remark apply, since they belong to a land which is not only our greatest dependency, "the fairest jewel in the British Crown," but is also extremely easy of access.

The fast ocean steamers of leviathan proportions have so minimized the dread of six days on the Atlantic that Englishmen, not merely business men, but people of leisure also, visit the United States every year in large numbers. Why is it, then, since Canada is only separated by a railway journey of twelve hours from New York, that so few of our fellow countrymen avail themselves of the opportunity to visit a country possessed of such countless attractions, and one that is bound so closely to us by the ties of brotherhood? This negligence must be attributed to the very general ignorance which prevails here regarding all things pertaining to the Dominion, her people, her history, her geography, her climate, her mineral and agricultural wealth, and even as to her sports.

I have been told by a Canadian, that in discussing with an English general the possibility of sending troops from England to the Far East via Canada, the latter raised the objection that it would not be desirable for them to travel over United States territory!

BOOKS NEW AND OLD

FAMILY PARTIES*

By ERIC GILLETT

CONTEMPORARY fiction is going through a very bad patch just now. There seem to be hundreds of novelists on both sides of the Atlantic who can tell a reasonably good story, but writers of genius in this form are conspicuous by their absence. This is, of course, only a personal opinion and it is pleasant to find that Mr. Robert Liddell, a novelist and critic of fiction, who is always worth reading, does not agree with it. In the Introduction to *The Novels of I. Compton-Burnett* he is brave and honest enough to call her a great writer. I think this is an over-generous and impulsive judgment, but I share his feeling that Miss Compton-Burnett has one of the most interesting and individual talents shown by present-day novelists. Her stories are almost entirely composed of dialogue. One can open any one of them at random and identify it immediately as hers, and there are probably only half a dozen novelists writing now to whom one could pay a similar compliment.

Miss Compton-Burnett's defects are obvious. She ignores altogether descriptions of people and places. She is magnificently cavalier in dealing with time. The children in her stories, who are often admirably realized, sometimes talk like little, wizened old men and women. Her scope is narrow indeed, smaller even than Jane Austen's. She confines herself to the family and Mr. Liddell shows a true sense of values when he quotes a horrific passage from Amiel's *Journal* as a summary of the subject to which Miss Compton-Burnett has devoted the fourteen novels of her maturity, written during the last thirty years.

I think, she says, that life makes great demands on people's characters, and gives them, and especially used to give them, great opportunity to serve their own ends by the sacrifice of other people. Such ill-doing may meet with little retribution, may indeed be hardly recognized, and I cannot feel so surprised if people yield to it.

After reading this it is not surprising to find that Miss Compton-Burnett has dated her novels between 1885 and 1901, with the exception of "Pastors and Masters," where the events are shown to have taken place after 1918. For her talent to have full scope, she must be able to depict a small family group almost entirely free from outside interference, and she has stated frankly that she does not feel that she has any real or organic knowledge of life later than about 1910. It was in 1868 that Amiel uttered his *cri de cœur*, "Oh, the suspicions, the jealousies, the rancours, the hates of the family, who has measured their depth?" To these Miss Compton-Burnett would, no doubt, add "the tyrannies." She is a specialist in tyrants of both sexes, and in her

* *The Novels of I. Compton-Burnett*. By Robert Liddell. Gollancz. 10s. 6d.

Mother and Son. By I. Compton-Burnett. Gollancz. 12s. 6d.

Seduction of the Innocent. By Frederic Wertham. Museum Press. 21s.

The Innocent on Everest. By Ralph Izzard. Hodder & Stoughton. 16s.

Abraham Lincoln. The Prairie Years and the War Years. By Carl Sandburg. Cape. 45s.

The Mint. By 352087 A/c Ross (T. E. Lawrence). Cape. 17s. 6d.

The Worcester Account. By S. N. Behrman. Hamish Hamilton. 12s. 6d.

Poems in the Porch. By John Betjeman. Illustrated by John Piper. S.P.C.K. 2s.

Collected Poems. By Stephen Spender. Faber. 15s.

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latest story, *Mother and Son*, Miranda Hume takes a place effortlessly in this distressing gallery. And one must add, no less amusing than distressing, because Miss Compton-Burnett has mellowed. Miranda may be a domestic despot, riding roughshod over her family and its dependants. She is capable of unbelievable rudeness and insolence, but she has a sense of humour and she can be just at moments when the reader feels that her arrogant complacency has passed the bounds of comprehension.

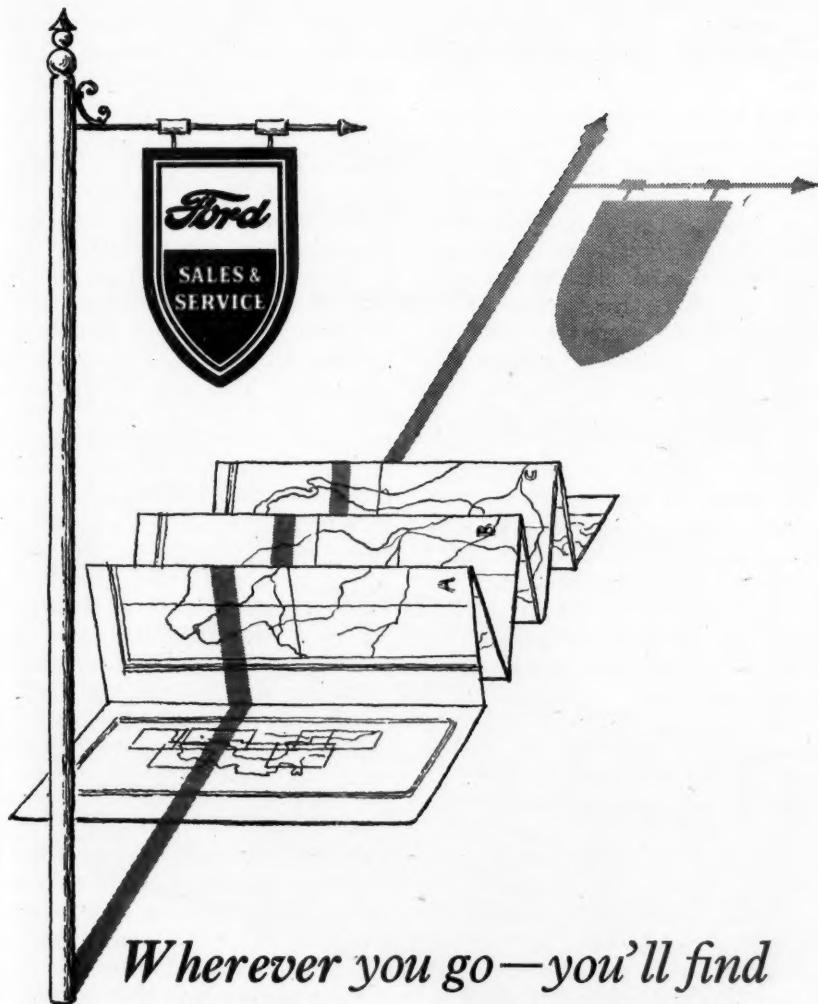
I am prepared to go a long way with Mr. Liddell in praising Miss Compton-Burnett's remarkable gifts for inventing conversations. I part company with him when he says, speaking generally of "The Happenings" of the novels, that the great distinction of the author is that she can make these happenings credible. This is just where, I think, she fails.

In *Mother and Son*, for instance, after an entertaining, sub-acid account of a visit paid by Miranda, her husband, and her son to some neighbours, Miranda suddenly informs her husband that she has not long to live. Almost without hesitation he tells her that two young nephews and a niece who are members of their household, are his own illegitimate children. The shock of this news kills her at once. This situation struck me as being so impossible that the illusion of reality was completely shattered. In spite of Mr. Liddell's enthusiastic advocacy I am willing to maintain that in *Mother and Son*, as in many of the earlier books, the author's magnificent dialogue is nullified by some incident or situation which can only be described as ludicrous. In some of the greatest books and plays ever written humour has been introduced after some supremely tragic moment to relieve almost unbearable tension. Great artists can do this with

a sure touch. Miss Compton-Burnett, who is at the top of her form when she is inventing conversation, can flop down to the bottom of the class when she depicts incident or action.

It would be unfair to take leave of Miss Compton-Burnett (and of Mr. Liddell), on this disparaging note. Some of the dialogue in *Mother and Son* is at least as good as anything the author has ever done, and at her best no living novelist excels her. She has the trick of taking some small matter—the like or dislike of a cat—and magnifying it until it dominates an entire household, just as it might do and often has done in real life. One cannot do justice to her by brief quotation. Mr. Liddell, who quotes copiously, has not managed to do so. I am not a Compton-Burnett addict. I do not rush out and procure each new novel of hers as it comes out. I do not even recollect her works with marked pleasure, but every time I begin to read one, I soon find myself compelled by her skill to surrender utterly to her small, cosy, horrid world, until some unrealistic stroke destroys my belief and forces me back into my old position of scepticism. In spite of Mr. Liddell's arguments I cannot find in Miss Compton-Burnett's novels the inevitability which is the hall-mark of the truly great novelist.

Dr. Frederic Wertham's *Seduction of the Innocent* is a study of the effect of Horror Comics on children in the United States. This is a timely and appalling revelation by a writer who has directed several of the largest psychiatric clinics in America, and has spent a great deal of time investigating the influence of Horror Comics in promoting juvenile crime. He prints sixteen pages of illustrations which makes his point almost as well as the book itself does. Dr. Wertham has had a long and depressing fight to



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make people realize that certain American publishers, mostly anonymous, were pursuing a deliberate policy of issuing children's Comics which appealed to the child's worst instincts. "I was fighting," he says, "not windmills, but paper mills." He was accused of tampering with the freedom of the Press, and it is significant that similar charges were made when the question was first raised in this country. Violent extremes seem to flourish in the United States more than they do in the more temperate climate of opinion over here, but there is no doubt that Dr. Wertham's *Seduction of the Innocent* presents a valuable assembly of evidence and case histories which should be read widely in this country. The most vulnerable children are the illiterates and semi-illiterate, those with sub-normal intelligence. It may be remembered that Craig and Bentley, the two boys convicted of the murder of a policeman, were both illiterate and only "read" comics. Dr. Wertham is able to show that numerous crimes of violence by young people were directly inspired by these nauseating productions. He has put forward a clear case for keeping them out of the hands of children everywhere.

So many books have been published recently about Himalayan exploration that I almost put aside Mr. Ralph Izzard's *The Innocent on Everest*. I am glad that I did not do so because it is in many ways the most interesting of them all. Mr. Izzard was sent out to cover the 1953 Everest Expedition for the *Daily Mail*. It was a difficult task. He had no official standing, no time to get adequate equipment, to get acclimatized, to plan his route. He was not a mountaineer. Newspapermen are famous for their tenacity when a "story" is at stake and Mr. Izzard is no exception. With good humour, apart from some sniping at officials

who seemed to him to be obstructive or unnecessarily pompous, he describes in lively style how he managed to gather material for his long cables home, and some of the odds and ends he picked up by the way. It was, for example, pleasant to discover that Milton Hayes's famous allusion to "the little cross of stone beneath the town" of Kathmandu was strictly accurate. He is eloquent about the various political interests which did their utmost to turn the ascent of Everest into an individual triumph for Tensing. He notes that throughout the last forty minutes Hillary was in the lead, and "if it must be known, it was Hillary who reached the top first." To all mountaineers this fact is not of the slightest importance because the two men were roped, and if either of them had put a foot wrong, both would have been killed. There is a pleasant tale of Hillary and his fellow New Zealander, Lowe, tiring of the interminable ascents and descents round outcrops on the way back to Kathmandu, lashing two air mattresses together and trying to shoot the rapids on them. This crazy raft overturned and both men managed to reach the bank safely. *The Innocent on Everest* is an admirable tribute to the spirit in which the expedition tackled their difficulties under Sir John Hunt's careful leadership and to Mr. Izzard's ingenuity in getting news about them.

Many readers have been intimidated from reading Mr. Carl Sandburg's monumental, six-volume "Life" of Abraham Lincoln because of its inordinate length. The author has now compressed the essential material into *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years and the War Years*. It is a book of 747 large pages, very readable, excellently produced and illustrated. I found it at least as fascinating to read as G. F. R. Henderson's famous *Stonewall Jackson*, and I have always thought



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this to be the best American biography.

Mr. Sandburg has the best possible qualifications for his book. As a boy in an Illinois prairie town he saw marching men who had fought under Grant and Sherman. He listened to stories told by people who had known Lincoln. In 1898 Mr. Sandburg served under General Nelson Miles who had fought in some of the bloodiest battles of the Army of the Potomac in 1864. Mr. Sandburg began to write a biography of Lincoln as country lawyer and prairie politician, he studied his subject for thirty years, but when this book was finished he decided to complete the life, and did so thirteen years later. He is a poet of distinction, but it seems unlikely that any of his work will be more likely to survive than the present biography. There is nothing sensational or revolutionary in Mr.

Sandburg's methods. His treatment is structurally as sound as possible. He builds up the character of Lincoln from hundreds of incidents and anecdotes and sayings. The President had a homely wit that hardly ever failed. To a man who came complaining against his superior officer, Lincoln merely said, "Go home and read Proverbs xxx, 10." The man did so and found "Accuse not a servant unto his master, lest he curse thee, and thou be found wanting." General McClellan was told that his reports of his army's progress were not sufficiently detailed. He sent a telegram to Lincoln one day, "Have captured two cows. What disposition should I make of them?" Lincoln replied, "Milk 'em, George."

Lincoln's progress from country lawyer to President is outlined so skilfully that the reader is left in no doubt as to how and why he matured. The hypercritical may feel that there is too much detail but it seems to me that there are no irrelevancies. Mr. Sandburg assembles a great mass of evidence and all of it is material. The final scenes are tremendously impressive, and the account of the President's dream-warning of his death is astonishing in its vivid detail. There is no doubt that Mr. Sandburg has been entirely successful in writing a great book about a great man.

So much has been claimed and prophesied for T. E. Lawrence's *The Mint* that the published book was almost bound to disappoint expectations. When Lawrence chose to take cover in the R.A.F. in the guise of 352087 A/c Ross, he decided to make notes about his experiences. "They will make," he noted in 1922, "an iron, rectangular, abhorrent book, one which no man would willingly read."

Tastes have probably changed since those days and many books have been

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LONGMANS

published which are much stronger meat than this daybook of the R.A.F. Depot kept between August and December 1922, with later notes. The limited edition, which I have also read, contains unedited barrack-room conversations which add nothing whatever to the book's value. *The Mint* is the kind of record which any sensitive man might have kept under the circumstances. Already newspaper columns contain correspondence from people who were at the Depot in Lawrence's time and on the whole there seems to be strong support for his criticisms. Lawrence's narrative style does not provide easy reading but there are some authentic glimpses of life in the ranks as it was then, and one delightful, uninhibited chapter, "The Road," which is the most light-hearted thing its author ever wrote, a memorable description of a race Lawrence had on his Brough motor cycle against a Bristol Fighter plane :

The bad ground was passed and on the new road our flight became birdlike. My head was blown out with air so that my ears had failed and we seemed to whirl soundlessly between the sun-gilt stubble fields. I dared, on a rise, to slow imperceptibly and glance sideways into the sky. There the Bif was, two hundred yards and more back. Play with the fellow? Why not? I slowed to ninety: signalled with my hand for him to overtake. Slowed ten more: sat up. Over he rattled. His passenger, a helmeted and goggles grin, hung out of the cock-pit the "Up yer" Raf randy greeting.

The Mint throws curiously little light on Lawrence's own character. In a prefatory note Professor A. W. Lawrence says that the author portrays himself at a time when he was nervously exhausted, following the intense and almost continuous strain involved by the war, by the struggle for post-war

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Illustrated. 25s. net

CASSELL

THE NATIONAL AND ENGLISH REVIEW

settlement, by the writing of *Seven Pillars*, and by writing the whole again after the theft of the original manuscript. Whatever the reason, *The Mint* is a series of pictures, a few of them casual, but the majority showing signs of the writer's determination to achieve a conscious literary style. In both kinds the author shows the marks of his strange, mystifying personality, but he never touches the certainty of a practised writer, the kind of thing Mr. S. N. Behrman achieves so surely in *The Worcester Account*.

In his biography, *Duveen*, Mr. Behrman managed to be both accurate and at times very funny indeed. Worcester, Mass., provides him with a very different setting. There his father settled down with his family in a tenement district. Worcester is an industrial city. The Behrmans lived in a small flat. It was a strictly orthodox household. For the twenty-four hours of the Sabbath it was forbidden not only to touch money but to talk about it. It was forbidden to make a flame, and so the gas had to be turned on during early Friday evening and enough coal put into the kitchen stove to last until Saturday night. The children were not allowed to carry bundles, to write a letter, to ride in any vehicle. *The Worcester Account* is a tender, frank and friendly account of its author's childhood and the people who impressed him most. The most remarkable of them was Emma Goldman, the most affectionately observed, Willie Lavin. Mr. Behrman manages somehow to combine wit and an element of mysticism without making either of them seem incongruous. He should follow up *The Worcester Account* with some later reminiscences. He is perfectly at home in this medium.

Some time ago the Director of Religious Broadcasting in the West asked Mr. John Betjeman to write and

speak some verses on the wireless. Very effective they are, too, and well worth printing in a little book called *Poems in the Porch*. I am sorry that Mr. Betjeman's verses on Mrs. Knight were composed too recently for them to be included here, but there can be no doubt that this book will have a successor, which will also, I hope, be illustrated by Mr. John Piper, who is at his happiest here.

Among the tortuous productions of verse writers during the last twenty-five years it would be interesting to discover how many of the writers read their works aloud when they have composed them. All good poetry can stand up to this test. Mr. Betjeman says that his verses do not pretend to be poetry. It is an over-modest judgment. At their best they have the merit of Rupert Brooke's *Old Vicarage, Grantchester*. They are clear, pointed and beautiful, as in the moving *Churchyards*. *The Friends of the Cathedral* is a satirical salute. All these pieces show that Mr. Betjeman in his maturity can bring off what he sets out to do with apparently effortless ease. One cannot be so happy about Mr. Stephen Spender's *Collected Poems*.

Mr. Spender is always deeply sincere. He is also self critical and modest. He expresses the hope that the book is a weeded, though not a tidied-up or altered garden. He hopes that anyone who has the patience to read through the book will see certain broad lines of development more clearly and strongly expressed than he might have expected from reading twice as many poems in the previously published volumes. Beginning with verses written in 1930 and coming down chronologically to 1953, he rounds off the selection with four early poems and a translation from Rilke. In almost everything he has written Mr. Spender shows his passion for truth and beauty and it is not easy

District of Dreams

to discover exactly why so few of his poems are entirely satisfying. It may be due to an apparent uncertainty of purpose, which runs through the book, and somehow blunts the impression one feels the poems ought to make. There are fine qualities in the poet's mind but they have never been fully realized in his work.

ERIC GILLETT.

DISTRICT OF DREAMS

THE LAKERS: THE ADVENTURES OF THE FIRST TOURISTS. By Norman Nicholson. *Robert Hale*. 18s.

IN his poems, and in his fine study *Cumberland and Westmorland*, published six years ago, Mr. Norman Nicholson has shown us that he has something fresh and interesting to say about the country of the English Lakes. He looks at them from a special point of view. He is not a resident of the Lake District. Nor—like most of the writers we particularly associate with that country—has he come and settled there, as an act of choice, from the South. He is a Cumbrian, bred outside the Lakes. As Wordsworth was born and brought up at Cockermouth, Mr. Nicholson comes from Millom, on the coast. That gives him an unusual attitude to the Lakes: his affection for them is deep, and yet at once somewhat detached. It equips him very well for the task he has undertaken here: to examine the different ways in which people have looked at the Lakes and written about them, from the later seventeenth century to our own time. For it is a subject that demands close knowledge of the country, keen poetic feeling, a sense of history and a sense of humour. Mr. Nicholson has them all, and he has done his work very well.

He begins, quite rightly, with an account of the country itself: an excellent piece of writing, spare, gritty, and sometimes evocative. Here he is, on page 2, describing the red sandstone of Cumber-

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land: "a clean plant-pot pink when new, and when old, a dark blackberry purple, mildewed as damp leather, and greened and furred with moss and weed." We then pass on to the travellers, who form the main subject of the book, beginning with Defoe and Celia Fiennes. Among the eighteenth-century visitors, Mr. Nicholson is particularly good on Pen-nant: "Of all the early travellers in the Lakes, he is the one for whom I feel the most sympathy. . . . His view was limited, but it was a real view; he saw only in part, but what he did see was really there. He did not invent his own landscape, and his very lack of imagination, his literal and materialist way of thought, represents the basic, objective view of the Lakes, to which every now and then we must return to renew our sense of perspective." With this preference for the accurate, the matter-of-fact, Mr. Nicholson has, naturally, no liking for the cult of the picturesque: "not even a half-truth, or a quarter-truth, but a lie," he calls it, though he treats William Gilpin himself kindly and fairly enough. It is easy to see the comic side of the discovery of the Lakes in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. But is there no more to it than that? Surely these travellers were, quite genuinely, seeing something for the first time, however absurd their accounts of it might be; and what they saw then is still lodged, whether we like it or not, in the furniture of our minds 150 years later.

If he is a little harsh in his treatment of the picturesque travellers, one excellent character emerges from them: Captain Joseph Budworth, who "strode into the literature of the Lakes like Long John Silver into *Treasure Island*" and left a racy and convincing account of his travels there, with his tall stories and his knack of getting on with publicans, and indeed with everyone he met.

So we arrive at the Lake Poets—a term that Mr. Nicholson dismisses with contempt. As a poet himself, we could hardly expect him to like Southey. But he is interesting on Coleridge, making use of some little-known and unpublished material, and at his best, as we should

hope, on Wordsworth and his sister. Indeed, some of the things he has to say about them are of permanent value, independent of the special theme of this book. Many gallons of ink and pounds of paper have been spent in the effort to account for the change and decline in Wordsworth's powers as a poet after the completion of *The Prelude*. No one, surely, has got nearer to the simple truth than Mr. Nicholson: "The senses, the nerves, could not respond for ever to the immense demands made upon them. Dorothy lapsed into near-imbecility, William—to whom the view had nearly been a vision—stiffened his sinews and, almost deliberately, hardened his arteries. . . . The strain of those fifteen or twenty years—the privations, the frustrations, the self-dedication, the searchings, the strivings, the headaches, the sore eyes, the colossal effort of creation—left him exhausted, anxious, uncertain. He put out a hand to steady himself, and he grasped the solid world—a gate, a wall, a tree, a crag, a mountain. He had turned from the mystery to the fact."

It is the new preoccupation with "fact" that concerns us here, for this was what led him to write his *Guide to the Lakes*, which, in spite of some faults (noted unsparingly by Mr. Nicholson) remains one of the most interesting guide-books in the language. And so we pass on into the closing years of Wordsworth's life, when the commercialization of the Lakes began in earnest. He foresaw it, protesting against the building of the railway to Windermere. But neither he nor Ruskin nor any man could stop it; and indeed, ironically, it owed much of its origin to the growing reputation of his own works.

Mr. Nicholson's book is not a full treatise on its subject. There are many interesting visitors who might have found a place in it and are not mentioned. But he has given us something more valuable than a work of frigid scholarship: a book that is full of living knowledge and observation, illuminated by a poet's understanding of the lakes and mountains themselves.

JACK SIMMONS.

GEORGIANA

Extracts from the Correspondence of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire.

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THE NATIONAL AND ENGLISH REVIEW

ENERGETIC POET

SOUTH COL. By Wilfred Noyce. *Heinemann* 21s.

WILFRED NOYCE has written a fine complement to Sir John Hunt's official book, *The Ascent of Everest*. In it we can follow again the story of the great expedition, written with the sensitivity of a poet by a mountaineer whose achievement contributed much to the success of the venture. *South Col* is a subjective account—"one man's story," as he himself puts it—of the expedition.

Naturally enough, some of the more dramatic incidents, including the story of May 29, 1953, when Hillary and Tenzing climbed up and along the final, corniced, rocky ridge to the summit, are not described in great detail. It is the inside story told by a man with the determination and courage to put on paper the thoughts which actually passed through his mind at the time, and who has thereby captured

permanently something of the spirit of those crucial days. This frank description of the author's own reactions is unusual and refreshing.

Perhaps the book is rather too long; parts of the description of the early stages are a little tedious; one quickly tires of place names and route descriptions and of most kinds of detail, in fact, unless they are human and vital. But the strength of the book lies in the author's sensitive, vivid and human descriptions high up on Everest itself. Here—where notes had to be jotted down in conditions of cramp and cold, lying uncomfortably in a small tent with a leaden head clamouring for rest—here it is that the quality of both the author and his companions is so faithfully interpreted through the lucid, terse descriptions. Thus, 26,000 feet up on the South Col, he writes: "With all the weight of the world on my hands I opened a diary, wrote a line or two, then stopped. My head sunk into a drowse. . . . Surely it should be possible to write, even here." And of the return to the Col of Ed Hillary and Tenzing, who only a few hours previously had stood together on the highest point on earth, he writes: "Sorry I can't say much. Oxygen just given out" Ed panted out. He refused the tea. . . . I felt childishly happy that Tenzing drank some and seemed to like it. But I doubt if he did; he is very polite." And the memorable night that followed, when Hillary, Lowe and himself squashed into a small tent: "The conversation was often not far from the level of this, 'The N.Z.A.C. and the Alpine Club ought to do us well. Wonder if they'll give us a dinner. Could do with something just now, I must confess.'"

Subjective as is his intention, Wilfred Noyce does nevertheless at times escape his self-imposed limitation and writes in wider perspective of the achievement. This is nowhere better expressed than in his picture of the "two Everests". "The gala lecture at the Royal Festival Hall gave a queer sense of that strange ghost, the second Everest, at whose altar we smart young men in tail coats and white ties were parading." And the first

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SHORT STORIES

and real Everest? This is how he describes the scene as he breasted the last slope to the South Col and looked for the first time on that grim wind-swept plateau on which were the remnants of the Swiss Camp of the previous year. "The yellow rags lay in dead heaps, or flapped forlornly from metal uprights that still stood. Round about was spread a chaos of food, kitbags, sleeping bags, felt boots. Whenever people talk of the conquest of Everest I close my eyes and see that ghost-ridden scene. Our tents must now look like that." And elsewhere: "That calm inscrutable hugeness is my picture of Everest."

It is a splendid book, modestly written and full of interest. There are many photographs of high quality and the author's poems, with which the book ends, form a fitting epilogue.

R. M. W. MARSH.

Short Stories

HESTER LILLY. Elizabeth Taylor. *Peter Davies.* 10s. 6d.

A CROWN OF CONVOLVULUS. Margaret Lane. *Heinemann.* 8s. 6d.

LAST RECOLLECTIONS OF MY UNCLE CHARLES. Nigel Balchin. *Collins.* 12s. 6d.

UNDoubtedly, the ladies have it in the volumes under review. In strength, delicacy, power of characterization, indeed in everything which makes this much maligned art-form a *story* instead of a drawn-out anecdote, they take due precedence.

Elizabeth Taylor's collection consists of the title-piece, which might be called a short novel, and sixteen short stories. *Hester Lilly* runs to seventy-eight pages, and it is neither too short nor too long. It is exactly the right length for what Mrs. Taylor wants to say, and she says it with the minimum of words and the maximum of feeling, observation, delightful malice, wit, accuracy, and acute sympathy. It is a story on two entirely different levels, but these levels are so naturally juxtaposed

that they blend into an unforgettable *conte*. On one level we are shown, against the background of a boys' boarding school, the breaking up of the marriage of Robert, the headmaster, and his still-pretty, still-youngish wife, Muriel, because of the coming of Hester, a young cousin of Robert's, to be his secretary. And on the other level we are presented with the loneliness and uncertainty of Hester, her resentment of Muriel, and her friendship with Hugh, a young master, and Miss Despenser, the village drunk. On one hand, we have Muriel's respectability and her unhappiness, despite her mother's diamonds and her position as "first lady"; and on the other we have Miss Despenser's solace in drinking Guinness and Madeira in the village pub, a solace which she needs to forget both that the school was once her family mansion and that she now lives in a cottage where all is a chaos of unwashed dishes, cat's dirt and loneliness. The parallel is beautifully

Investigation of a legend



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THE NATIONAL AND ENGLISH REVIEW

worked out, both levels combining to give a well-rounded portrait of Hester, gawky, morbid, and so *adolescent*. Above all, the story is memorable for its robustness. Mrs. Taylor has already shown this quality in her novels, a quality which I think has been overlooked sometimes because of admiration for their other strong points. (I am bearing in mind particularly Mrs. Bracey, the old bed-ridden harridan in *A View of the Harbour*.) This robustness is seen to even greater advantage in this collection. Not only have we Miss Despenser; we have many others in the shorter pieces, notably cocky, blind Harry in *Spry Old Character*, and eighty-years-old Mrs. Crouch in *Taking Mother Out*. Mrs. Taylor seems to me to be at her best with such portraits; they are unsentimental, full of vitality, perfect in every line and shade. And she details their triumphs, sorrows, and, above all, *lust* for life, with unerring skill in a few well-chosen sentences, such as:—

She picked up the cat and wiped her wet face on his fur, then she gathered up the photographs and crammed them back into the mother-o'-pearl-inlaid box.

Not long after, just as Mrs. Brimmer at The Hand and Flower was saying: "Well, we choked her off, gentlemen," Miss Despenser entered the bar. "So sorry I am late. Some visitors called," she said cheerily.

"A pleasure, I'm sure," Mrs. Brimmer replied. "And now last orders, if you please."

This is a most interesting, individual collection, and I hope that the inveterate novel-readers who already admire Mrs. Taylor will not pass it by because they "just can't bear short stories."

Miss Margaret Lane, biographer of Edgar Wallace, Beatrix Potter and Charlotte Brontë, also shines as a writer of the shorter piece. Her talent is more gentle than Mrs. Taylor's, but both have the knack of pin-pointing a mood or a movement in a telling phrase. *A Crown of Convolvulus* contains ten stories, mostly set in Ireland, many dealing with childhood memories. The title story is about a small boy and girl who play during their holi-

days near an old mine-shaft at the edge of the links, their play continually menaced by the attentions of Tom Daft, a halfwit, and Big Aggie, a raucous virago. The contrast between the innocence of the children and the malignity of these half-pitiful grown-ups is beautifully done, and, unlike the children, we remain aware of the tragedy which must inevitably stretch beyond the denouement long after we have finished reading about it. This tragedy lurking behind the simplicity of childhood is also touched upon in the recollection of the spinster sisters, whose refusal to believe in the existence of the War leads to their unnecessary deaths, and in the story of the little girl who meets a blood-stained stranger in an empty cottage and locks him in a cupboard. But Miss Lane also touches upon the lighter side in *The Festive Amazon*, where a girl is left a legacy as long as she takes care of her great-aunt's parrot, Queen Adelaide. "Three hundred pounds a year for forty years was riches. They (her parents) looked at her with respect." What happens to Queen Adelaide is deftly and amusingly told. Miss Lane's style is simple and pleasant, with nothing precious or pretentious. It is a most satisfying collection.

Nigel Balchin's Uncle Charles is a "born spectator." He is also a professional week-end guest, preferring to arrive on Thursday evening and stay until after lunch on Tuesday. Most of his stories are punctuated by innuendoes that his glass is empty or that yes, he will just have another cigar. Uncle Charles is a born *raconteur*, and because of this his stories tend to be long-drawn-out anecdotes rather than stories in the accepted sense. Nevertheless, they make entertaining reading. Their subject-matter is varied, and their scenes range from the Western Front in the 1914-1918 War, where Uncle Charles makes an unsuccessful attempt to murder his nasty Colonel, to the Riviera and large English country houses. Amusing as they sometimes are, however, they have the ephemeral quality of most magazine writing.

FRED URQUHART.

NOVELS

Novels

THE DARKNESS. Evan John. *Heinemann.*
12s. 6d.

ANGRY UNCLE DAN. James Yaffe. *Constable.* 13s. 6d.

ACQUAINTED WITH THE NIGHT. Heinrich Boll. *Hutchinson.* 9s. 6d.

TRUE AS A TURTLE. John Coates. *Gollancz.* 12s. 6d.

SHADOW OF PALACES. Pamela Hill. *Chatto & Windus.* 12s. 6d.

RACE ROCK. Peter Matthiessen. *Secker & Warburg.* 12s. 6d.

THE MAN FROM THE SEA. Michael Innes. *Gollancz.* 10s. 6d.

FIND A VICTIM. John Ross Macdonald. *Cassell.* 9s. 6d.

THE late Evan John was a classical scholar, a practical student of drama and a man acquainted with the ways of tyrannical government. These attributes he has used to produce a most interesting book presenting a highly plausible, indeed fascinating, non-Christian background to the Crucifixion. The story is told, or developed, in documents and letters, some, but not all, to or from historical personages (Pilate, Herodias, Gamaliel, Nicodemus, Joseph, and so forth); one or two are authentic, all (or almost all) catch the spirit of their times even if they use the language of to-day. As a rule I find these dressings-up of the Biblical past very uncomfortable, but *The Darkness* is an exception. I should add that there is nothing in it to shock Christian faith—on the contrary, it sets out the plain, factual basis of Christianity.

James Yaffe is a deceptive writer. *Angry Uncle Dan* is boisterously funny. It is about a little Chicago Jew who is liable to wild outbursts of anger, and about his troubles and wanderings and his relations with his quiet wife, his daughter, his brother, his friends. It is, however, a good deal more than fun—it provides penetrating studies of its characters (notably its second-generation Americans); and on top of that it contains what must be an authentic picture of Chicago in the slump of the '20's. Whether these are people and scenes about which you want

to read, however well and wittily they are depicted, is a matter that I must leave to you; but I advise you to try it.

Though *Acquainted with the Night* is set in post-war Germany, and is German in its characters and details, its imaginative central theme has nothing to do with nationality. It is told in alternate chapters by a man and his wife. They are crushed by poverty. They have several children, another is on the way. They have only one thin-walled room. The man has been driven to drink, to futile gambling, because he cannot bear the humiliations of the one room and so lives as best he miserably can "on his own." We see him painfully learning (sometimes we see rather darkly; I am not too clear what part religion plays) how to live in, but as it were above, the squalor and indignity of that room. The ending contrives to be optimistic.

I confess that it was a relief to turn to *True as a Turtle*—but a disappointment to find that John Coates is not, in it, as diverting as he can be. To please the husband's firm a young couple spend two of their four weeks of honeymoon on a yacht (as crew rather than guests), and so ply wittily to and from Dinard. There is a mild subordinate plot, but the book mainly depends upon the humours of the bride's unfamiliarity with such nautical existence and her difficulty in adjusting her newly-married self to masculine assessments of what, in such circumstances, are the first things that must come first. There is a lot of good fun, but rather of a sameness and rather of the kind that it takes an amateur sailor to appreciate.

With *Shadow of Palaces* we move to the France of Louis XIV. This is the story of Francoise de Maintenon—the widow Scarron, ultimately Louis's wife. The novel well deserves the epithet "historical"; as its publishers claim, it is obviously based firmly upon fact, and it is furthermore a three-dimensional reconstruction of an enigmatic character. Whether at the end the reader can feel that he quite understands the book's heroine I am not sure. If he cannot, it is,

I think, because contradictions in her life and in her development either are inexplicable or are not to be explained as Pamela Hill suggests. A thoughtful, sensitive book but one in which it would have helped the reader to have the passage of years more plainly marked.

With *Race Rock* we move to a modern but primitive New England, to the loves, lusts, cruelties and follies of (essentially) three youths and one girl who were a group in childhood and are now a group rearranged. The book is mainly concerned with one wild week-end, but the narrative is rather confused by flashbacks and reconstructions as it moves towards a bewildering climax of violence and brutality. Somehow or other this tidies up the relationship of George (from whose standpoint the story is told) and Eve, once friend Sam's wife but latterly George's mistress.

There is no difficulty about understanding Michael Innes's latest high-tension thriller until its conclusion piles its Pelion of plot upon its Ossa of counterplot. The tale begins extremely well—a man swims ashore to a Scottish beach to be befriended by young Cranston whose nocturnal amorous frolic with Lady Blair has been thus awkwardly interrupted. It continues with Cranston's efforts (Australian girl-cousin abetting) to get *The Man from the Sea* to London. Inevitably such a yarn evokes, and rather suffers from, comparison with John Buchan, but at any rate it is all very up to date, alike in its use of aeroplanes and tanks, and in the basic explanation of its chief alarms and excursions.

Lastly an American detection-thriller, set somewhere in the neighbourhood of Sacramento, Cali., introducing the fashionable private sleuth, and taking full advantage of a crudity and violence (including sexual) which the unwary British reader might suppose to be an everyday feature of American life. It would, however, be churlish to challenge this convention, since we owe to it the "tough" school of which *Find a Victim* is an effective example.

MILWARD KENNEDY.

BOOKS IN BRIEF

BOOKS about criminology seem to become more popular with the general reader every year. The familiar old cases are rehashed again and again. Mr. Montgomery Hyde is not entirely free from this fault in *United in Crime* (Heinemann, 15s.). Sir Travers Humphreys is a useful stand-by, and the less well-known activities of the late Lord Simon are discussed. The book is worth reading for the author's sensible *Foreword on Crime* and for the section on "The Young Offender."

* * *

Knight Errant (Hodder & Stoughton, 16s.), by Brian Connell, is the story of the remarkable life of Mr. Douglas Fairbanks Jr. There is material here for a first-rate biography, and it is a pity that Mr. Fairbanks did not choose to write his own reminiscences or to defer publication of an authorized biography until some future date. Hollywood, his relationship with his famous father, the last war, and unconventional excursions into diplomacy make a sound basis for personal memoir. Mr. Connell's Life deals with events so recent that he has not succeeded in presenting them in proper perspective.

* * *

Two interesting reprints, with additional material, have just been published. Mr. Middleton Murry's *Keats* (Cape, 21s.) is a most useful study. The present vogue for ballet and the recent Diaghileff exhibition have brought forth a re-issue of Mr. Arnold Haskell's *Diaghileff: His Artistic and Private Life* (Gollancz, 18s.), with a new Foreword and illustrations.

* * *

An important episode in Eastern European politics is described in *Alexander Von Battenberg* (Cassell, 30s.) by Count Egon Corti. When Bulgaria was made an autonomous tributary province of Turkey, the young Alexander of Hesse went there as Prince of Bulgaria in 1879. The story of his abdication and short,



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romantic life are depicted against a background of the secret diplomacy in which he was a pawn.

* * *

The second exhibit in Messrs. Melrose's *Rogues Gallery* is *Capt'n. Thos. Johnstone, 1772-1839* (21s.), and Mr. James Cleugh has chosen to treat this swashbuckling smuggler and first-class engineer as though he were the romantic hero of a novel. It is certainly a colourful, lively story.

* * *

Tales of Hearsay and Last Essays (Dent, 7s. 6d.) is the final volume in the Collected Edition of the works of Joseph Conrad. It is noteworthy because it includes one of the author's finest stories, *The Warrior's Soul*.

* * *

One of the heroines of the last war, Edith Stein, is commemorated in *The Scholar and the Cross* (Longmans, 18s.), by Hilda C. Graef. Miss Stein was a

contemplative, whose steadfast courage brought her in the end to the gas chamber at Auschwitz. She was a philosopher who might have made her mark.

* * *

There have been additions to two famous series. In the new Ardern *King John* (Methuen, 18s.) Mr. E. A. Honigmann believes that Shakespeare wrote the play in 1590-91. The latest reprint in the Everyman series is J. M. Rigg's able translation of *The Decameron* (Dent, two vols., 6s. each).

* * *

Professor Joseph Fletcher's *Morals and Medicine* (Gollancz, 15s.) is a useful contribution to medical ethics, dealing, as it does, with euthanasia, the patient's right "to know" and other problems. The book is based on his Lowell lectures which were given at Harvard in 1949.

E. G.

Financial

MARKET REVIEW

By LOMBARDO

THE City could hardly have had more food for thought than it has been given in the month of February. From the four corners of the earth important news has poured in with disturbing impact, and from Whitehall the statisticians have issued figures on home and overseas trade as significant as the warnings against undue optimism made by Mr. Butler in political speeches.

From the Far East came messages of the events in Formosan waters, each one more grave than the last; from Paris came the news of the death agony of the French Government, with significant echoes in East and West Germany; and from Moscow came the thunderclap of Malenkov's utterly unexpected resignation. To the Formosan news was linked some alarming American official comment, causing anxious speculation on White House policy; the French Chamber's rejection of the Mendès-France Cabinet aroused doubts on the future of European unity and defence; and the timing and unusual method of Malenkov's resigna-



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tion left the layman flabbergasted, while the experts vied with each other in giving all the possible varieties of interpretation and in prophesying future Kremlin policy towards the West.

When this Review began, in the January issue, I remarked that the Stock Exchange is a sensitive galvanometer, responsive to economic and political news. Each week of February brought impacts which might have been expected to cause the indicator to oscillate, and there were indeed movements more definite than tremors in the first ten days of the month. But the behaviour of the market was orderly and the volume of selling was small. Indeed when Wall Street produced a \$2 rise overnight on the 9th, the London market staged a rally on the 10th, and "No Change" in the Bank Rate, following the $\frac{1}{2}$ point rise in the first week, steadied the gilt-edged market at the lower levels. By the close of business at the end of that week much of the lost ground had been recovered.

It is noteworthy that while this was in progress the Whitehead Iron and Steel issue met with an overwhelming response, and when dealings began on the 14th, the demand for the shares established a heavy premium on the issue price of 55s., at which level the prospective yield is 6·35 per cent.

On the day that brokers were carrying out orders to pay a premium of 5s. 9d. for disappointed applicants for the Whitehead shares, it was officially announced that the National Savings figures for the previous week were the best for seven years—over £8 $\frac{1}{2}$ million surplus of new savings over withdrawals—and investors were studying the merits of several proposed new issues, including those announced by two leading companies in the field of electronics—General Electric and Electric and Musical Industries.

In spite of the shocks of the international news it seemed that investors were still disinclined to sell equity shares, and still ready to compete for new issues. Yet at this moment came warnings from both the official figures of our trade balances, and from the Chancellor him-

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self. "A hand must be kept on the reins," said Mr. Butler, "and even a gentle tug given now and again to keep us on the straight path." Deviations from the straight path were revealed by the trade figures for January. These showed that the 1954 pattern of an increase of exports over imports in the first half of the year, slowly changing to increasing imports and decreasing exports in the second half, had been continued. The January increase in imports compared with a year ago was more than the increase in imports for the whole of 1954, and although exports have greatly improved since the final quarter of last year, the trend is definitely in the wrong direction.

The behaviour of what is known as transferable sterling has also given cause for some anxiety. "Commodity shunting" has increased in volume and variety and weakened the sterling-dollar relationship. Foreigners can buy commodities in London with sterling and sell them to dollar countries for dollars, or buy for re-export to the Continent against payment in transferable sterling. In this way the Sterling Area loses the additional dollars it would receive if the official sterling-dollar mechanism were used, and the discount on transferable sterling widens as "shunting" increases.

The reason given in some quarters for the desire of the foreign merchants to translate their balances out of sterling is the fear of the outcome of the next Election. The Chancellor's problem has also caused some observers to wonder if the Election will come before the autumn.

The Government, in fact, is getting into a tricky position. The industrial boom led to full employment, at the peak of which hire purchase restrictions were removed, and a further impetus was thus given to home consumption: extensive plans for capital expenditure on roads, railways and atomic plant have been announced, and the continuation of prosperity seemed firmly indicated. The plans for a gradual and orderly progress towards convertibility of sterling appeared well under control. The ordinary man refused to believe in the possibility of an

imminent war of nuclear weapons, and preferred to remember the Chancellor's words about doubling the standard of living in twenty-five years, and hoped the next Budget would give him tax reliefs.

Suddenly he was told that the terms of trade had moved so adversely that he must change his ideas. The ordinary man is also the small investor. He thought for a week and then decided he should take some of his profits. The result, as we go to press, is the gloomiest showing of minus signs on the list of stocks that has been seen for a long time.

The balance sheets being published by good companies are almost without exception encouraging, and those of the major industrial concerns due in the next few weeks are expected to show good profit figures. The enthusiasm of recent buying perhaps pushed the price of many stocks to a point where the yield was too low, and current fears may result in selling to a point where the yield becomes attractive to the long-term investor. The ordinary man should keep his holdings in the equity shares of the good firms that will have work a long way ahead; and if he believes the Government will be returned, he should buy more if the prices fall to an attractive yield level. Perhaps, by the end of March, professional investors will be picking up "cheap stock" in quiet markets.

LOMBARDO

RECORD REVIEW

Orchestral

THE L.P. repertoire of modern music (to use that unsatisfactory term for want of a better one) is enriched by the addition of two remarkable works, the Suite from Bartók's "pantomime," *The Miraculous Mandarin*, and Britten's *Sinfonia da Requiem* (with *Diversions for Piano and Orchestra*). Bartók's work has so lurid a story that it ran into trouble with the censors in Hungary and Germany, as a result of which the composer made a suite out of the ballet assuming, correctly, that what the eye does not see (in spite of what the ear hears) the heart does not grieve over. The music is predominantly

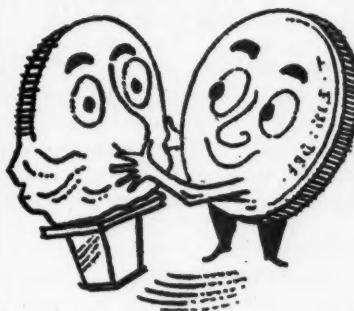
rhythmic and violent and extraordinarily suggestive of the characters of the libidinous Mandarin and of the girl who entices him—and other men. The performance (Dorati and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra) of this remarkable score is brilliant and spares us nothing. (It is only recommended to those with strong nerves.) On the reverse are Kodály's charming variations on a Hungarian folk-song, *The Peacock*, which fall like balm on the ear after the asperities of Bartók's music. The recording is extremely good (Mercury MG50038).

Britten conducts his two works himself and secures very good performances. The three movements of *Sinfonia da Requiem* take their titles from the Mass for the Dead; they are *Lacrymosa*, *Dies iræ*, and *Requiem aeternam*. The *Dies iræ*, a movement that lives fully up to its title, makes a shattering impact. The consoling last line of the Latin Sequence finds no place here, but is reserved to the last movement, a slumber song of peaceful death. This striking work, which Britten composed in 1940, deserves to be better known. On the reverse Julius Katchen gives a brilliant performance of the delightful and ingenious *Divisions for Piano and Orchestra* (left hand) which Britten wrote for the one-armed Austrian pianist, the late Paul Wittgenstein. The orchestras are the L.S.O. (*Divisions*) and the Danish State Radio (*Sinfonia*), and in both cases the recording is first-rate (Decca LXT2981).

Roy Harris's *Third Symphony* and Howard Hanson's *Fourth Symphony*, played by the Eastman Rochester Symphony Orchestra and conducted by Hanson, are on Mercury MG40004. Hanson's Symphony also has headings taken from the *Requiem Mass* for its four movements, but though it is an interesting work, the music compares unfavourably with Britten's *Sinfonia da Requiem*. Harris's Symphony is one of his finest works and a classic in America, and it is good to have such an admirable performance (and recording) as Hanson gives of it—and of his own work. He is a remarkably able conductor.

As often in other works, Edwin Fischer

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Also recommended

Two Haydn Symphonies, No. 26 in D minor ("Lamentatione") and No. 36 in E flat major. Vienna Chamber Orchestra conducted by Anton Heiller. A wholly delightful disc. (Parlophone PMA1016.)

Chamber Music

Victor Aller (piano) and the Hollywood String Quartet give us the best performance and recording to date of Brahms's F minor Quintet (Capitol CTL7075), and the Hungarian String Quartet continue their recordings of the complete Beethoven string quartets with a taut render-

ing of the first "Rasumovsky" (F major) which, though deficient in the lyrical element and, as regards the leader, not always pleasant in tone, is undeniably impressive (Columbia 33CX1203). Two Mozart quartets, F (K. 590), and A (K. 464), are most beautifully played by the Amadeus String Quartet (Nixa WLP 5092) and can be confidently recommended: but though I enjoyed it hugely, and found the recording superior to the Nixa version (Vienna Konzerthaus Quartet, etc.), I should advise anyone else to sample first Schubert's Octet in F, op. 166, played by the Vienna Octet, before purchase. It is, in the true sense, a very refined and far from vigorous performance, lovely in tone and, to me, curiously appealing (Decca LXT2983).

Instrumental

It is a pity piano duet playing has gone so much out of fashion, for there is quite a considerable literature of fine and delightful music for this medium, as Paul Badura-Skoda and Joerg Dernus have been showing in their Nixa recordings. The present disc includes the splendid *Lebensstürme* (a one-movement sonata) which Schubert composed not long before he died, and two sets of Variations (op. 35 and op. 82 No. 2). The two young artists take turns as *primo* and *secondo*, which is as it should be. Performance and recording are admirable (Nixa WLP5147).

Song

Walter Ludwig, with Michael Rauchensei at the piano, gives a beautifully sung and sensitive performance of Schumann's song-cycle, *Dichterliebe* on Deutsche Gramophon DG 16029, the pianist failing only, and unaccountably, in the lovely postlude, which is oddly unpoetical. It is good to have the cycle sung by a tenor, the voice for which it was intended. The balance is excellent. To warm the heart and anticipate, perhaps, holiday pleasures, there are two discs of Neapolitan songs most beguilingly sung, to guitar accompaniment, by Roberto Murolo (Durium DLU96001-2).

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It is curious how rarely Puccini's *Manon Lescaut* receives a good performance in the artistic sense. It is often well sung but subtlety is missing. This is, to be sure, a quality Italian audiences do not care for, with them vocal power is all. In Decca's recording of the opera, which is excellent, we get plenty of vocal thrills from Tebaldi (and Monaco), but not the finer shades Tebaldi has given to her *Tosca* and *Butterfly* and *Mimi*. The smaller parts are satisfactorily done and Pradelli handles the Orchestra of the Accademia di Santa Cecilia well (Decca LXT2995-7).

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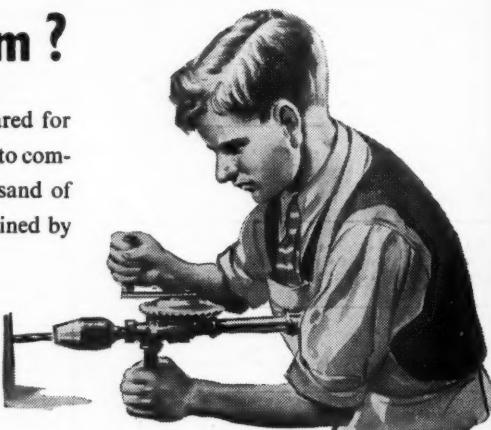
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